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Hizbollah attacks Israeli-allied militia patrol

MARJAYOUN (AFP) — Hizbollah guerrillas attacked a patrol of the pro-Israeli South Lebanon Army (SLA) in the occupied border zone of southern Lebanon on Tuesday, security sources said. There were no immediate details on casualties. Hizbollah said its guerrillas detonated an explosive charge near a six-member SLA foot patrol on a road leading to the town of Bent Jbeil in the central sector of the border area. "All members of the patrol were hit," said a Hizbollah statement distributed in Beirut. In retaliation, Israeli and SLA artillery reportedly bombarded the outskirts of the villages of Kafra and Yater, located at the edge of the border zone and where Hizbollah maintains strongholds. Hizbollah is spearheading a campaign to drive Israeli troops out of the Israeli self declared "security zone" set up by Israel in 1985.

Iraq eases fuel rationing

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Fuel rationing introduced in Iraq amid fears of a U.S. attack was eased Tuesday to allow motorists to buy more petrol but at far higher prices, the oil ministry said. Ration cards are being retained, however, allowing the purchase of 10 litres a day at 1.5 dinars per litre. Any extra volume now costs 20 dinars a litre. Fearing an attack on its refineries, Iraq brought in fuel rationing on Nov. 15 after U.S. threats of military action over the expulsion of U.S. arms inspectors working for the United Nations. The inspectors returned on Friday but Washington is keeping up the pressure by sending extra firepower to the Gulf.

Netanyahu draws up 'insufficient' plan to resolve peace process crisis

I am not asking for the moon, only for what was signed and agreed on under supervision of President Clinton — Arafat

Combined agency dispatches

PRIME MINISTER Benyamin Netanyahu has drawn up a plan to expand Palestinian control in the West Bank to more than a third of the occupied territory as part of a new initiative to revive the peace process, a senior official said Tuesday.

News of the offer sparked renewed threats of a mutiny from right-wing nationalists in parliament who theoretically have the votes to topple Mr. Netanyahu's fragile coalition government.

David Bar-Illan, a senior Netanyahu advisor, said the proposal being considered by the government "would place 35 to 37 per cent of the West Bank under Palestinian administration."

In return, the Palestinians would have to forgo any further transfers of land and enter accelerated negotiations to reach a final status agreement for the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem in six to nine months.

They would also have to forego one further Israeli troop withdrawal called for under interim peace accords pending the outcome of those talks.

"This is also linked to action by the Palestinian Authority against terrorism" in areas under their control, Mr. Bar-Illan told AFP.

Israeli press reports said the Netanyahu initiative would also involve an undefined slowdown in the expansion of Jewish settlements in disputed areas.

Israel's proposal raised tensions with the Palestinians on Tuesday rather than bring the two sides closer to negotiations on a permanent peace agreement.

"It's a mockery," Palestinian Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo said of Israel's proposal to withdraw troops from 6 per cent to 8 per cent of the West Bank in stages one and two of a three-stage withdrawal, and to skip the third phase altogether.

The Palestinians have said they expected Israel to hand over 30 per cent of the West Bank in each of the three stages. "I am not asking for the moon, only for what was signed and agreed on at the White House under the supervision of President Clinton," said Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

However, Israel's deputy defence minister, Silvan Shalom, said the Palestinians' demand was a non-starter. "This is something they should know has no chance," Mr. Shalom told Israel army radio. "It is not even a dream. It's just something that can never be realised."

In a U.S.-brokered agreement it signed in January, Israel had promised to pull back troops in the West Bank in three stages by mid-1998. Earlier agreements were not specific on the scope of the pullback saying only that by the end of the third stage, troops should have withdrawn to "defined military locations."

Mr. Netanyahu has been under growing pressure from the United States to make a significant withdrawal offer to the Palestinians, reportedly of at least 15 per cent.

President Clinton showed his displeasure over Israel's hardline stance earlier this month when he failed to receive Mr. Netanyahu at the White House while the Israeli leader was in the U.S.

Angered by the snub, Mr. Netanyahu has asked his aides to halt efforts to arrange a White House meeting, army radio said Tuesday.

On Monday night, Mr. Netanyahu's adviser Yitzhak Molcho met for 90 minutes with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and presented Israel's offer, a Palestinian official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

However, Mr. Arafat said Tuesday that no formal offer was made. "It [the proposal] is not official until now," Mr. Arafat said.

Palestinian negotiator Nabil Shaath said there was no chance the Palestinians would accept a proposal deemed insufficient by the U.S. "This is an attempt to divide our land into cantons and keep it under Israeli control. If the U.S. administration rejects this, do you expect us to look at it in any seriousness?"

Also Tuesday, army radio said the first five families have moved into Kfar Oranim, a new Jewish settlement of 150 homes just across the invisible line between Israel and the West Bank.

It was not immediately clear who authorised the construction of a new settlement, since both Mr. Netanyahu and his dovish predecessors from the Labour party have said they would not build new settlements, only expand existing ones (see story on page 12).

Workers at Kfar Oranim told the Associated Press that the construction began a year ago, at a time when Mr. Netanyahu was already in power. The defence ministry, which has to authorise any settlement construction, said in a statement that no new settlements are under construction.

"We don't know of such a settlement and no building permits were issued for such a settlement," the statement said.

In July 1995, Jewish settlers protesting against the Labour government had begun clearing land for Kfar Oranim, located about 7 miles west of the West Bank town of Ramallah.

In another development, an Israeli newspaper quoted Ariel Sharon, a hawk in Mr. Netanyahu's government, as saying that the establishment of a Palestinian state was a forgone conclusion.

"The day is not far when the Palestinians will make a declaration about an independent state," the Yediot Ahronot daily quoted Mr. Sharon as saying in briefings he gave during a private trip to the United States.

His Majesty King Hussein accompanied by Her Majesty Queen Noor, HRH Princess Iman, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali (far right) and Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi (second from right) walk through the Wadi Haddadeh-downtown tunnel Tuesday (Photo by Yousef 'Allan)

King inaugurates tunnel

Tunnel connecting downtown with Wadi Haddadeh will help divert heavy traffic away from city centre

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday inaugurated the 200-metre-long Wadi Haddadeh-downtown tunnel, a project executed by the Greater Amman Municipality to reduce traffic congestion in downtown Amman.

Accompanied by Her Majesty Queen Noor and HRH Princess Iman, the King cut the ribbon at the inauguration ceremony formally opening the tunnel which took 180 days to build, down from an estimated 350 days before the work had started.

King Hussein was briefed on the project by Amman Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi who also outlined the plans to widen the streets at Wadi Haddadeh and other municipality projects.

The King, the Queen and the Princess then walked through the tunnel which has a diameter of 12.5 metres. A 2.4-metre-wide pedestrian walkway is linked to a 25-metre long, nine-metre wide concrete bridge at King Hussein Street, on the other end of the tunnel from Wadi Haddadeh, just in front of the old court house.

According to Dr. Abbadi, the tunnel was designed by a local firm and a company from New Zealand. Digging for the tunnel was carried out by an Italian company, and the municipality authorities supervised the construction work.

In an address at the ceremony, Dr. Abbadi said that the inauguration coincided with the Kingdom's celebrations of King Hussein's 62nd birthday and was a gift from the municipality to the King.

Dr. Abbadi said the tunnel will enable traffic approaching the capital from the east and heading towards Abdali to avoid the city centre, thus reducing the present traffic congestion in the heart of the capital.

Attending the ceremony with the King were Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Speaker of the Senate Zeid Rifai, Chief of the Royal Court Awn Khasawneh as well as other senior officials, senators, deputies, and other prominent guests who included the Italian ambassador and senior members of the firms that took part in the construction of the project.

UNSCOM carries out arms searches while Security Council splits on Iraq

BAGHDAD (AFP) — U.N. weapons experts carried out new inspections on Tuesday to bring their work back on track, while the Security Council was divided over the process of disarming Iraq.

Several teams of experts left the Baghdad headquarters of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) which is in charge of eliminating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

Iraq's official news agency said six teams were headed for sites inside and outside the capital, and Iraqi authorities were assisting their work. One of the teams used a helicopter for aerial surveillance.

Inspections have been carried out on a daily basis without incident since Saturday, but UNSCOM has so far steered clear of sites which Iraq deems "sensitive" for its sovereignty or national security.

The United States insists the inspectors be given access to all sites, while Iraq has said three presidential sites were "symbols of national sovereignty" and off-limits to UNSCOM.

The Commission's chairman, Richard Butler, is expected to visit Iraq for talks on the issue by the end of next week, diplomats at the U.N. said. But he first wants to ensure the inspection regime was back on track.

Economic sanctions in force since the 1990 invasion of Kuwait cannot be lifted until UNSCOM certifies that it has eliminated Iraq's capacity to produce weapons of mass destruction.

The inspectors were pulled out of Iraq on Nov. 14, a day after its U.S. members were expelled.

But Iraq last week lifted the anti-U.S. ban which it imposed on Oct. 29, and UNSCOM returned to Baghdad on Friday after a three-week break in inspections.

On Monday, the Security Council failed to agree on a disarmament report after Russia rejected a British report.

British ambassador Sir John Weston told reporters that "one delegation had a problem" with Britain's proposal for a short letter welcoming Friday's report by a U.N. panel on the work of UNSCOM.

Other diplomats said Russian ambassador, Sergei Lavrov, had strongly opposed the British text.

Russia's delegation, which had circulated a longer alternative draft statement to the Council, was expected to put forward new suggestions on Tuesday in a bid to end the deadlock.

The failure to reach consensus on a response to the report by UNSCOM's advisory board highlighted the split within the 15-member Security Council.

The board meeting was called after Russia, pledging to work for a rapid lifting of economic sanctions, defused the crisis with Iraq over U.S. nationals working as weapons inspectors.

Both Russia and France are pressing Mr. Butler to travel as soon as possible to Baghdad for talks with Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz.

The UNSCOM report calls for "immediate, unconditional and unrestricted" access to the U.N. inspectors. But at the same time, "the Commission respects the legitimate national security, sovereignty and dignity concerns of Iraq."

Mr. Butler said Monday that the issue of "sensitive" sites would top the agenda of his talks in Baghdad.

He also promised the Security Council to follow up on recommendations in the report calling for aerial surveillance "with additional aircraft" and for more inspectors on "the widest geographical basis."

Baghdad has called for a restructuring of UNSCOM, arguing that it is U.S.-dominated, and protested at the use of a U.S. spy plane, which flew over Iraq unchallenged on Monday.

Mr. Clinton told his Chinese counterpart Jiang Zemin in Vancouver on Monday that the U.S. was committed to maintaining the sanctions imposed on Iraq in 1990 "until there is compliance" with UN resolutions.

"We cannot give concessions for defiance or [to] weaken UNSCOM," he said, according to National Security Adviser Sandy Berger.

The U.S. has sent a second aircraft carrier to the Gulf, the USS George Washington, and deployed radar-evading Stealth fighters in Kuwait to keep the pressure on Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. More than 30 more U.S. fighter planes were due in Bahrain on Tuesday.

Nineteen Kurdish rebels, two soldiers killed in Turkey

DIYARBAKIR (R) — Turkish security forces have killed 19 Kurdish separatist guerrillas for the loss of two soldiers in the southeast in last two days, a statement by the emergency rule governor's office said on Tuesday.

The statement said 13 rebels of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) were killed in Siirt province, five in Diyarbakir and one in the province of Bitlis in Turkey's mainly Kurdish southeast.

Two soldiers were killed in the clashes, it said.

More than 27,000 people have been killed in 13 years of conflict between the Turkish security forces and the PKK, who are fighting for Kurdish self-rule in the southeast.

Turkey's involvement hinders Iraq's Kurdish fragile peace negotiations

ANKARA (R) — Feuding Kurdish factions agreed on Tuesday on a ceasefire in northern Iraq but heavy Turkish involvement in the volatile region looked set to block the progress of Western-backed peace efforts.

"The Patriotic Union Of Kurdistan [PUK] is accepting and is committed to an unconditional ceasefire," Ankara PUK spokesman Shazad Saib told Reuters.

The PUK, led by Jalal Talabani, gained territory from the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) in mid-October after breaking a Western-sponsored ceasefire that had held for a year.

But Massoud Barzani's KDP, supported by Turkish troops, armour and air power, reclaimed the losses in heavy fighting and on Monday declared a unilateral ceasefire.

Western diplomats say Turkey's increasing embroilment in the region make attempts to resurrect the Iraqi Kurdish peace process more difficult. Turkey has previously hosted negotiations as one of three NATO-member mediators.

"Ankara is now part of the problem, not the solution. You can't take part in the fighting and then be an unbiased mediator. The PUK won't accept that," a diplomat told Reuters.

Mr. Talabani's group also says resumption of the "Ankara peace process" sponsored by the United States, Britain and Turkey is impossible in its present form.

"I rule that out. Turkey is a part of this conflict. They could join as another side, but not as a sponsor," Mr. Saib said.

Northern Iraq has been out of Baghdad's control since after the 1991 Gulf war and a Western air force shields the rugged region from any Iraqi government attacks.

Turkey has kept troops in northern Iraq since May to destroy bases of Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) guerrillas who use the area as a base from which to fight for self-rule in southeastern Turkey.

Turkey accuses Mr. Talabani's faction of harbouring the PKK and says its air strikes on Talabani territory target only the Turkish Kurd group. The PUK denies the charge and says Turkish bombing is coordinated with KDP attacks.

Mr. Saib said KDP demands that Mr. Talabani rein in the PKK were unrealistic. "They want us to act as their guards against attacks by other groups," he said.

"We hope that there will be no more Turkish intervention, no more air raids. It's not just the KDP, Turkey is fighting us as well."

Iran expects all 55 OIC members to attend December 9-11 summit

TEHRAN (AFP) — All 55 members of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) will be represented at their eighth summit in Tehran next month — the largest international gathering here since the 1979 revolution — an Iranian official said Tuesday.

Twenty-seven countries will be represented by their heads of state, three by their kings, seven by prime ministers, three by crown princes and four by vice presidents, said the chief organiser of the event, Sadeq Kharazi.

He did not say what level of delegation the other members would send.

The secretary general of the United Nations, the vice president of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the director general of UNESCO, the director general of Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and three observing delegations from Bosnia, Central Africa and Guyana have also been invited to the Dec. 9-11 summit.

"Our government has deployed all its means to ensure the summit will be organised in good conditions," said Mr. Kharazi, who is a brother of Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi.

"The liberation of Jerusalem and Palestine, conflict in Kashmir, situation in Bosnia, crisis in Afghanistan and ending colonial rule in Muslim countries" will be among the main subjects to be discussed, he said.

Female guests will be required to observe the mandatory Islamic dress code in the Islamic Republic, and a "veil service" will provide women with the appropriate covering on their arrival at Tehran airport.

A total of around $80 million has been set aside to finance the gathering, much of it spent on new sites for the meetings, restaurants and residences for top officials.

'Female guests required to observe mandatory Islamic dress code, and a "veil service" will provide women with the appropriate covering upon arrival'

Work is underway around the clock on the building in northern Tehran where the summit is to be held, with Islamic architecture taking centre stage.

The guests vary from old friends such as Syria, to former enemies such as Iraq and a host of states such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Jordan that have had tense ties with the Islamic Republic for many years.

Afghanistan will not be officially represented but an Afghan delegation has been invited, Mr. Kharazi said, without providing details.

Between 5,000 to 6,000 people, including 700 journalists, are expected to arrive for the summit.

The level of participation will be an indicator of how successful Iran has been in its recent diplomatic drive to improve relations with the Arab world.

Tehran's big hotels have been requisitioned to house official delegations from around the world, while particularly important leaders will be lodged in old imperial palaces.

The moderate new government of President Mohammad Khatami wants to use the summit to polish the country's tarnished international image and emphasise its "important" place in the Muslim world.

Since taking office in August, President Khatami has tried woo the Sunni Muslim Arab and Islamic world that has been wary of Iran's former pledges to export its Shiite Muslim revolution.

But many fear that intense political infighting in the past week in the Islamic Republic could blemish the summit.

A moderate cleric, Mohammad Javad Hojati-Kermani, called Monday for a truce in the factional fighting in a bid to ease tension ahead of the summit.

Islamic conservatives have staged demonstrations against a dissident cleric throughout the past week after he attacked Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The summit will be preceded by a meeting of OIC foreign ministers on Dec. 7-8 and a meeting of experts on Dec. 5-6.

French foreign minister softens tone on Israel visit

TEL AVIV (AFP) — French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine, who two months ago assailed Israel's handling of the peace process as "catastrophic," took a softer line on his first official visit to Israel Monday.

"I am here to ask questions, listen and hear the answers," Mr. Vedrine said after meeting his Israeli counterpart, David Levy, at the start of a tour of Israel, the Palestinian territories and Egypt.

"I have already seen that the peace process remains at the heart of the [Israeli] government's concerns," he said.

"Of course there are problems, that's obvious, and we need to identify them," he said.

Mr. Vedrine, the first minister from France's five-month-old Socialist government to visit Israel, acknowledged that his remarks Monday were far less pointed than a declaration he made in September calling Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu's policies "catastrophic."

"Yes I expressed a deep concern at one time, from a nation which considers itself a true friend of Israel," Mr. Vedrine said Monday. "It's to better understand the situation that I have come here."

The French diplomat did however refer to "very intense consultations between the Europeans and also with the United States, all countries where there is a real concern about the peace process."

After meeting Mr. Netanyahu for nearly an hour later in the day, Mr. Vedrine said he expressed the "very deep concern" felt by European governments over the state of the peace process.

"He [Netanyahu] expressed his determination to pursue the peace process. He told me he was thinking hard about it and working on it," said Mr. Vedrine, saying it was not the issue whether he believed the Israeli leader's pledges or not.

His visit coincided with news of a new Israeli initiative to breathe life into peace talks with the Palestinians with a conditional offer to transfer a modest amount of additional West Bank territory to Palestinian control (see story on page 11).

Asked about the plan, Mr. Levy said Israel "hopes that we have come to a point where the peace process can resume. But this depends also on our Palestinian partners."

Palestinian officials reacted warily to the Israeli offer, saying the 10 per cent of additional West Bank land it apparently would place under self-rule was far less than required under signed interim peace accords.

He dined on Monday evening with Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, who was expected to raise a possible French role in trying to ease tensions in Lebanon, where there has been an upsurge in fighting this week between Israeli troops and Hizbollah.

Mr. Levy also mentioned the "very dangerous" situation in Lebanon but stressed the need above all for a resumption of peace talks with Syria which were broken off 21 months ago.

"If Syria wants to talk to us, it will find that Israel wants peace," he said.

"I am ready to meet with Syrian representatives," he said.

Mr. Vedrine was due to meet Tuesday with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat in the West Bank city of Ramallah and then to leave Wednesday for Cairo.

Arafat forgives EU for boycotting Orient House

RAMALLAH (AFP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat told French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine Tuesday that he had forgiven the European Union for bowing to an Israeli ban on ministerial visits to the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) unofficial headquarters in Jerusalem.

"The important point is not visiting Orient House, the [Europeans] are completely supporting our position concerning Jerusalem," President Arafat said at a joint press conference with the French diplomat.

Mr. Vedrine, like other EU ministers over the past year, refrained from visiting Orient House during his two-day stay in Jerusalem and the Palestinian territories.

He instead was to meet later Tuesday with the top PLO official in Jerusalem, Faisal Husseini, in a school across the street from Orient House — a compound located in a residential neighbourhood of Arab east Jerusalem.

France had been one of the states most insistent on visits to Orient House by EU ministers as a symbol of Europe's refusal to recognise Israel's 1967 annexation of the Arab sector of the Holy City.

But the EU backed down last year after the new right-wing government of Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu threatened to close the PLO office if foreign officials continued visiting the site.

Israel said such visits granted a quasi diplomatic status to Orient House and thus undermined Israel's claim to sovereignty over Arab east Jerusalem. The Palestinians hope to make Arab east Jerusalem the capital of an independent state.

Iraqi women commando volunteers, part of the first women's brigade, shouting anti-American slogans at a camp in Baghdad Tuesday. On Tuesday U.N. weapons inspectors started a fourth day of searches at sites in and around Baghdad, looking for biological, chemical and nuclear weaponry that violate U.N. conditions imposed after the 1991 Gulf war (AP photo)

Arafat orders release of professor critical of government

GAZA CITY (AP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on Tuesday ordered the release of an English language professor jailed in July for asking students in an exam about government corruption.

The detainee, Fathi Subuh, 44, was taken from prison to Gaza City's Shifa hospital two weeks ago after complaining about stomach pains. Reporters were barred from seeing Mr. Subuh, with doctors saying visitors needed clearance from security officials.

Just before being taken to the hospital, Mr. Subuh had refused food for two days to protest his detention. His family has said he was tortured in jail.

Mr. Subuh's wife, Fatmeh, said Tuesday she had been informed of President Arafat's decision to free her husband, and said she expected him to go free later in the week.

Mr. Subuh has been imprisoned since July, despite appeals by Amnesty International and other human rights groups for his release.

Mr. Subuh's lawyer, Raji Sourani, was told in September that his client was suspected of having contacts with an unspecified foreign state — apparently Israel. Mr. Subuh was never charged, Mr. Sourani said. Only on Sept. 9 — more than two months after his arrest — was he brought into one of President Arafat's special military courts.

Mr. Subuh works at Gaza's Al Azhar University, and Mr. Sourani said his client angered the authorities by asking his students in an exam about corruption in the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

The PNA has frequently been criticised for its human rights record, which includes arrests of government critics and mistreatment of detainees.

Bus passengers escape grisly fate at Algerian gunmen's roadblock

ALGIERS (AFP) — A bus-driver saved his passengers from a grisly fate by driving straight through a roadblock erected by an armed gang on a coastal road west of Algiers, the Algerian press reported Tuesday.

The daily newspaper Al Watan said the driver, who was ferrying students and public-sector workers to the town of Bouharoun, refused to stop at the roadblock, sensing something suspicious.

The armed gang, taken aback when the bus rammed through the roadblock, opened fire on it, but none of the passengers was hurt, the paper added.

There have been several instances of armed extremists setting up roadblocks as if they were official security forces and then perpetrating massacres.

In a separate incident, the newspaper Le Matin said security forces killed two armed Islamists Monday and wounded two others near Medea, south of Algiers. Security forces also discovered and destroyed stashes of supplies at the scene, reported Le Matin.

The daily Al Khabar said a car-bomb was defused Monday at a market in the western Algiers suburb of Bab Al Oued. The market was targeted three weeks earlier in two bomb attacks which killed at least two people and wounded others.

Security forces, meanwhile, continued to surround the Bainem forest, on the western outskirts of the capital, where decomposing bodies and stashes of arms and food supplies had been discovered, press reports said.

Sudanese rebel leader seeks Egyptian support

CAIRO (AFP) — The rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) on Tuesday said a landmark visit to Egypt by its leader John Garang was aimed at gathering support against the "oppressive" regime in Khartoum.

"The historic visit of Colonel Garang comes as a response to an official invitation by [Egyptian] President Hosni Mubarak in August," the SPLA said in a statement received here.

"Colonel Garang will hold official talks on the prevailing political situation in the Sudan and other issues of common interest," the statement said.

The SPLA and its allies in the northern opposition National Democratic Alliance (NDA) "attach great value and importance to this timely visit... because of the leading role Egypt plays in the African and Arab regions.

"We hope for and count on the support of the government and people of Egypt to the struggle of the Sudanese people for justice, democracy, peace and unity of the Sudan on a new and correct basis against the brutal, divisive and oppressive" Islamist-led government of General Omar Beshir, it added.

Mr. Garang arrived here Monday for his first visit since he became the head of the SPLA in 1983, when the group took up arms to end domination of the mainly Christian and animist southern Sudan by the Arabised, Muslim north.

The 14-year-old conflict has directly or indirectly claimed around one million lives.

At least 13 killed in Somali fighting

MOGADISHU (AFP) — At least 13 people have died and nine were wounded in inter-clan fighting near Mogadishu in which two Italian aid workers were kidnapped, medical sources said Tuesday.

The Italians, named as Pierpaolo Biagi and Mario Porchetta, were released Monday after intervention by north Mogadishu faction leaders following the Sunday night attack on the compound of the agricultural agency CINS at Daganley village, 28 kilometres north of the capital.

They flew to Nairobi Monday evening.

Militia sources said the fighting erupted at Daganley late Sunday, then spread Monday to Al Irfid and other villages near Mogadishu.

Two of the wounded were in critical condition, a doctor told reporters in north Mogadishu.

The gunmen who attacked Daganley were ambushed on their way back to Mogadishu by Daganley villagers, who disabled a battle-wagon.

Balad district, 35 kilometres north of Mogadishu, and villages along the road to the capital were reported tense Tuesday, with militiamen deploying.

The area is a stronghold of faction leader Ali Mahdi Mohammad, who is currently in Cairo holding peace talks with his archrival, Hussein Mohammad Adid.

Moroccan opposition party cries foul on parliamentary elections

RABAT (R) — A third Moroccan opposition party protested on Tuesday against what it called widespread fraud in elections for a lower house of parliament and said there was now widespread vote-buying ahead of a ballot for the upper house.

In a statement, the Socialism and Progress Party (PPS) said the irregularities seen in the Nov. 14 poll were starting to emerge for the Dec. 5 indirect election for the Chamber of Counsellors, the 270-seat upper house.

The house will be indirectly elected through electoral colleges and will have power to topple the government through a vote of confidence.

"The operation of drawing up electoral lists and the electoral campaign... are characterised by the declared phenomenon of vote-buying in the framework of a veritable auction," said the PPS statement, carried in the party newspaper Al Bayan.

The PPS is a member of the four-party Koutla group which was in opposition in the last parliament, the bloc won a total of 102 seats in the new 325-seat lower house, two seats more than the former pro-government Wifaq bloc.

Another Koutla party, the Istiqlal which won 32 seats, down from its former 51, last week rejected the results of the ballot, saying it had been manipulated by the authorities.

Koutla heavyweight, the Socialist Union of People's Forces, claimed in a statement just after the ballot that it had recorded 1,072 cases of fraud during the electoral campaign.

Interior Minister Driss Basri said the Nov. 14 ballot was "transparent and fair." The body responsible for the organisation of the elections has agreed to investigate several cases of alleged fraud.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel. 773111-19
PROGRAMME TWO

14:10 .....Jonny Quest
14:30 .....Super Dave
15:00 Secrets of Treasure Island
15:30 .....Spell Binder
15:40 .....Monsters Today
16:10 .....Border Town
16:30 .....Neighbours
17:00 ..... French Programmes
19:00 .....News in French
19:30 .....News Headlines
19:35 .....Doc. — High Tech Culture
20:00 .....Comedy — Some One Like Me
20:30 .....Challenges
21:10 .....Kung Fu
22:00 .....News in English
22:30 .....Land's End
23:15 .....American Gothic

PRAYER TIMES

04:48 .....Fajr
06:09 .....(Sunrise)Duha
11:23 .....Dhuhr
14:13 .....'Asr
16:37 .....Maghreb
17:58 .....'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifieh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 5516245
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 688404
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.
Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Temperatures are expected to dip slightly, skies partly cloudy with a chance of showers, and winds westerly moderate to active. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Amman 10/18
Aqaba 17/26
Deserts 09/19
Jordan Valley 15/24

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 20, Aqaba 27 Humidity readings: Amman 41 per cent, Aqaba 55 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS NIGHT DUTY

Dr. Yousef Rashid 875792
Dr. Jum'a Abu Dhiab 758848
Dr. Khalil Jbali 784450
Dr. Walid Al Masri 675485
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy ...890280
Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Al Salam pharmacy ..636730
Yacouh pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632
IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qann 281484
Al Quds pharmacy .....(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Walid Halaseh 982799
Khalifeh pharmacy ...985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre .637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police.....843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints.....661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints.....897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephnue Repairs.....623101
Abdali Telephnue Repairs 661101
Jordan Televisinn 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Informatinn 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, 644281/6
Akileh Maternity, 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen777101/3
Al-Bashir, ...775111/26
Army, Marka.....591611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital.....674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery ..865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital(09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights are supplied on phone 08 (52700) or 08(53250).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:35 .....Jeddah (RJ)
08:50 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:00 .....Jeddah (add) (RJ)
09:25 ....Larnaca, Damascus (RJ)
15:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:35 .....Frankfurt (RJ)
16:50 .....Istanbul (RJ)
17:05 .....Paris (RJ)
17:45 ....Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
17:45 Kuala Lumpur, Abu Dhabi (add) (RJ)
17:50 ..Brussels, Vienna (RJ)
18:10 .....London, Berlin (RJ)
18:50 .....Rome (RJ)
23:10 .....Beirut (RJ)
00:25 .....Cairo (RJ)
01:00 .....Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights
05:50 .....Bucharest (RO)
09:30 .....Cairo (MS)
09:30 .....Al 'Arish (PF)
10:15 Doha, Al Hudaidah (IY)
10:30 .....Jeddah (SV)
10:50 .....Kuwait (KU)
13:10 .....Tunis (TU)
13:25 Doha, Abu Dhabi (GF)
13:50 .....Tel Aviv (LY)
14:30 .....Doha (QR)
15:05 .....Vienna (OS)
15:30 .....Algiers (AH)
16:05 Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK)
20:10 .....Beirut (ME)
21:10 ...Paris, Damascus (AF)
22:30 .....Athens (OA)
23:15 .....London (BA)
23:30 ....London, Beirut (BA)
23:35 .....Amsterdam (KL)

Royal Wings (RW)
07:45 .....Aqaba (RW)
09:05 ..Amman (QAIA) (RW)
09:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:20 .....Tel Aviv (RW)
18:30 ..Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:20 .....Aqaba (RW)
22:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES

10:35 ..... Rome (RJ)
11:00 .....Istanbul (RJ)
11:15 .....Berlin, London (RJ)
19:30 .....Colombo (RJ)
19:35 .....Beirut (RJ)
20:00 .....Jeddah (add) (RJ)
20:05 ...Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
20:15 .....Bombay (RJ)
20:15 .....Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
20:30 .....New Delhi (RJ)
20:45 .....Cairo (RJ)
21:00 Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
21:15 .....Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
22:45 .....Sanaa (RJ)

Other Flights
00:35 .....Amsterdam (KL)
01:55 .....Bucharest (RO)
06:35 ..... Larnaca (CY)
08:00 .....Beirut (ME)
08:25 .....London (BA)
10:30 .....Cairo (MS)
10:30 .....Al 'Arish (PF)
11:15 Al Hudaidah, Aden (IY)
12:00 .....Kuwait (KU)
12:00 ..... Jeddah (SV)
14:10 .....Tunis (TU)
14:20 .....Shariqah (AH)
15:15 ..Bahrain, Muscat (GF)
15:10 .....Tel Aviv (LY)
15:30 .....Doha (QR)
15:50 .....Vienna (OS)
19:30 Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PK)
23:55 ..Damascus, Paris (AF)

Royal Wings (RW)
06:45 .....Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
08:15 .....Aqaba (RW)
09:30 ..Amman (QAIA) (RW)
16:45 ....Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:55 .....Tel Aviv (RW)
20:30 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:50 .....Aqaba (RW)

part of the first women's brigade, show ... aghdad Tuesday. On Tuesday U.N. ... ...ries at sites in and around Baghdad ... ...ear weaponry that violate U.N. confi... photo)

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Princess Sarvath stresses Kingdom's moderate role

AMMAN (J.T.) — HRH Princess Sarvath has stressed that Jordan has always been a force for moderation in the Middle East, promoting regional cooperation and offering solutions to seemingly impossible situations, according to a press release Tuesday.

Deputising for His Majesty King Hussein in addressing the annual dinner of the prestigious Worshipful Company of Broderers in London Monday evening, Princess Sarvath underlined the Kingdom's unwavering commitment to democracy and peace-building in the Middle East, despite the difficulties the peace process has been facing, the statement continued.

"There is still room for hope, and...we will never give up," the Princess told the annual dinner of the company, which was established in 1561.

Princess Sarvath, who outlined Jordan's position on the peace process, reiterated the country's rejection of Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territories as illegal and a blatant disregard for international law, the announcement said.

She spoke of the negative impact the closure of the Palestinian territories has on the Palestinians, noting that the resulting strain of the

punitive and small-minded shutdown of the West Bank and Gaza merely compounds the problems in the area, the statement read.

"The ensuing fight for day-to-day survival at the most basic level has plunged people into an abyss of despair and frustration, which will only get more and more entrenched unless the root causes of their problems are addressed comprehensively and speedily," Princess Sarvath stressed.

She noted that His Majesty has often reiterated that commitment to the land-for-peace formula is the basis for pushing the peace process towards the achievement of comprehensive peace on all tracks of the Arab-Israeli negotiations, according to the statement.

Addressing the question of Jerusalem, Princess Sarvath underlined Jordan's support for the Palestinians in their effort to obtain political sovereignty in the Holy City.

She also stressed that the followers of the three monotheistic religions should be able to exercise their religious rights in Jerusalem under complete conditions of freedom and without duress, and must have unfettered access to their sacred sites, the press release stated.

Peace is a strategic asset and not just at the regional level, Princess Sarvath emphasised. Accordingly, "we need the help of like-minded countries in the world to join us in developing a regional code of conduct that understands that peace must be institutionalised," the Princess said.

Noting that peace is a prerequisite for the attainment of social, human, and economic development in the region, Princess Sarvath said everybody should shoulder their responsibilities in overcoming obstacles facing the pursuit of peace in the Middle East, the statement read.

"Despite so many provocations, we must never lose sight of the fact that prospects are still bright for our region as a whole," Princess Sarvath said.

Acting Foreign Minister Abdullah Ensour Tuesday briefs two members of the visiting German delegation representing the Social Democratic Party (Petra photo)

German delegation briefed on regional developments, Kingdom's economy

AMMAN (J.T.) — A parliamentary delegation from the German state of Lower Saxony Tuesday met acting Foreign Minister Abdullah Ensour, who briefed them on developments in the Middle East peace process, the Jordanian economy, and the country's economic reform programme.

Dr. Ensour outlined the favourable investment climate in Jordan, the incentives offered by the government to investors, and the facilities for businesspeople.

He expressed hope that German businesses would make substantial investments in the Kingdom to back its development.

The nine members of the delegation, who are on a one-week visit, expressed their interest in Jordan's endeavours and said they appreciated the country's ongoing development efforts.

They said they would carry back their impressions and their own ideas for encouraging German businesses to invest in tourist and industrial projects in Jordan.

The delegation, which represents the German Social Democratic Party, will meet with other officials to review Jordan's role in the peace process and to inspect the Kingdom's progress in several fields, with special attention to the ongoing democratic process and the Nov. 4 general elections.

The parliamentarians' visit was organised by Nazeh Musharbash, a German member of parliament of Jordanian origin, who said the visit aims to provide the delegation with an in-depth view of Jordan's social, economic, and political life.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

* Children's film "The Wind in the Willows" (Lord Toad and other stories) at the British Council, Jabal Amman at 5:00 p.m.

FIFTH JORDANIAN THEATRE FESTIVAL

* Two plays entitled "The Necklace and the Bracelet" and "Yarma" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m., and 6:00 p.m. respectively.

TWELFTH ITALIAN FILM WEEK

* Two films entitled "L'amico immaginario" (The Imaginary Friend) and "Piccoli orrori" (Little Horrors), with subtitles in English, at Samir Al Rifa'i auditorium, University of Jordan at 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. respectively.

BOOK EXHIBITION

* 10th Annual Child Book Exhibition at the Ahliyyah School for Girls, Jabal Amman until Nov. 29.

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR/CHOIR

* Annual Christmas charity bazaar by the American Union of Amman at the Marriott Hotel on Friday, Nov. 28 (11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.).

* Annual YWCA Christmas classical choir at the Royal Cultural Centre on Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday (3rd, 4th, 6th and 7th Dec. '97) at 8:00 p.m.

LECTURES

* "Traditional and Contemporary Arab Art" (in Arabic) by Mohammad Hussein Joodi at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh at 6:00 p.m.

* "Castra Praetorii Moberi" (Qasr Bshir and the Paradores Concept by Tim Strickland at the Friends of Archaeology (FoA) at 6:30 p.m. (Tel. 5930682) — Lecture sponsored by FoA and the British Insitute at Amman for Archaeology and History (BIAAH).

*"Authors in Exile" on the life of German author Heinrich Heines by von Erich Loest (in German with translation into Arabic) at Al Farahidi auditorium, University of Jordan at 11:00 p.m.

* "Als Schriftsteller zwischen Ost and West" by von Erich Loest at the University of Jordan at 3:00 p.m.

Ambassador to U.N. urges world support for UNRWA's Palestinian refugee services

NEW YORK (Petra) — Jordan has urged the world community to provide all forms of assistance to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) so that it can pursue the task of providing educational, health, and social services to the Palestinian refugees.

In an address Monday evening to the special U.N. political committee charged with tackling questions pertaining to UNRWA and the Palestinian refugees, Jordan's ambassador to the U.N. Hassan Abu Ni'meh stressed that UNRWA is a fundamental factor in reducing the sufferings of the refugees and preventing despair, frustration, and extremism from prevailing.

Referring to Jordan's contribution to alleviating the refugees' plight, Mr. Abu Ni'meh said the Kingdom hosts nearly 1.5 million refugees and is the second major contributor to the general effort of providing refugee aid after UNRWA.

He said the Palestinian question is the crux of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the refugee problem must be settled permanently and justly on the basis of U.N. General Assembly Resolution 194 of 1948, which provides for the repatriation or compensation of the Palestinian refugees.

The ninth article in the Jordan-Israel peace treaty of 1994 emphasises the rights of the Palestinian refugees as one of the main requirements for a comprehensive peace, he said, but nothing of that provision has materialised, either through the bilateral or the multilateral phase of the Middle East peace process, according to Mr. Abu Ni'meh.

A report by Peter Hansen, UNRWA commissioner general to the U.N., reflects the agency's critical financial situation and the accumulated deficits in its annual budgets, he said.

These deficits, according to Mr. Abu Ni'meh, had earlier compelled UNRWA to reduce its services, stop hospitalisation programmes, halt appointments of teachers, and take other drastic measures to save funds for basic services.

Jordan, the host country to the greatest number of refugees, nearly 1.5 million out of a total registered number of 3.4 million, has been affected more than any other by the reduction of the agency's services, he said.

He pointed out that between July 1996 and June 1997, Jordan spent $345 million for the refugees, mostly in education, health, and social services.

In the social security package programme that will be carried out over the next three years, Jordan has made plans for spending $240 million on water, sewage, waste water treatment, roads, and electricity networks for the country's 13 Palestine refugee camps, he added.

Mr. Abu Ni'meh said until the Palestinian refugee problem is solved, UNRWA services will be desperately needed, and more donations are required to enable the agency to shoulder its humanitarian responsibilities.

UJ, Texas Tech sign cooperation agreement

AMMAN (J.T.) — The University of Jordan and Texas Tech University (U.S.) Tuesday concluded an agreement on cooperation in scientific matters and the exchange of expertise in higher educational fields.

Under the agreement, which was signed by University of Jordan President Fawzi Gharaibeh and Texas Tech University President Donald Haragan, faculty members from one institution will have the opportunity to visit the other institution in connection with sabbatical leaves, joint research programmes, teaching, and consultation with regard to curricula development and upgrading.

The agreement is designed to encourage communication and collaboration between members of the two universities in areas of mutual concern as well as benefit and facilitate the exchange of scholars and professors for teaching and research.

Under the agreement, Texas Tech will provide financial support to deserving students nominated by the University of Jordan in the form of scholarships, teaching and research scholarships, or other stipends as may be available and appropriate.

In return, the University of Jordan will facilitate the enrolment of Texas Tech students in its various programmes of study and offer them similar privileges as those provided to Jordanian students.

Under the provisions of the agreement, graduate students will have the opportunity to conduct part of their research at the other institution and have access to available resources and supervision.

The two sides said the agreement was signed in recognition of the importance of academic interchange between universities and active engagement in a wider national and international scholarly community by members of academic institutions.

The agreement, they said, confirms the significance of the furthering of knowledge and the creative role of international scholarly communication and collaboration in the development and dissemination of learning and research.

They noted that the agreement will be effective for a period of five years and will be renewed with their mutual consent.

The Texas Tech president was later received by Minister of Education and Higher Education Munther Masri, with whom he discussed cooperation between the American university and Jordanian institutes of higher education.

Dr. Masri briefed the guest on the development of higher education in Jordan's academic and vocational institutes.

Majali meets with monetary fund vice president, pledges continuation of economic reforms

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Tuesday said the government was going ahead with the economic restructuring programme, which has brought about tremendous benefits to the national economy.

Dr. Majali made his remarks during a review of the country's economic situation with Stanley Fischer, first vice president of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and Deputy Prime Minister for Services and Minister of Administrative Development Abdullah Ensour and Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Mohammad Saleh Hourani.

Mr. Fischer voiced appreciation of Jordan's close cooperation with the IMF and the World Bank, which he said has had the most positive effect on Jordan's economic growth and the investments in the country.

According to IMF studies, Jordan will be able to realise a six per cent economic growth rate, he said.

He also expressed satisfaction with the foreign currency reserves in the Central Bank of Jordan.

The benefits of economic reforms, Mr. Fischer stated, do not appear overnight, but what is guaranteed is that the benefits will be forthcoming and Jordan will no doubt reap the fruits of its economic reforms.

Jordan has been implementing the economic restructuring programme as agreed with the IMF since 1989.

Jordan-EU agreement seminar focuses on intellectual rights, rules of origin aspects

By Hind-Lara Mango and Amy Henderson
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Apprehension and uncertainty prevail among pharmaceutical industrialists regarding the possibly drastic developments in their sector with the entry of Jordan into the Euro-Jordanian Association Agreement, according to Maher Matalka, secretary general of the Jordanian Association of Manufacturers of Pharmaceuticals and Medical Appliances.

During Tuesday's session of a three-day seminar on the agreement entitled "Partnership in Development," Mr. Matalka spoke to the Jordanian business community about the effects of the agreement on the pharmaceutical sector.

The seminar was organised by the Jordan Businessmen Association and the European Commission in Amman to explain the details of the agreement, which was signed Monday in Brussels by Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf, president in office of the Council of the EU, the foreign ministers of the 15 member states, and the president of the EC.

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), Mr. Matalka said, pose the major challenge to the pharmaceutical industry in Jordan.

"The agreement requires adequate and effective protection of patents for chemicals and pharmaceuticals in line with the WTO agreements known as the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)," he explained.

It is estimated that the global production of pharmaceuticals will exceed $300 billion in 1997, with 84 per cent of the total concentrated in seven industrialized countries, according to Mr. Matalka.

International economic and regulatory pressures and the high production cost of new products have propelled the industry towards more mergers and acquisitions, consequently making smaller producers more vulnerable in terms of their innovative and marketing abilities, he said.

Pharmaceutical market sales in the Middle East and North Africa, he said, amounted to $5.1 billion, accounting for 1.6 per cent of global production.

"The Jordanian pharmaceutical industry is the leading sophisticated industry in Jordan, second only to the mining industry," he stressed. Jordan's exports of medicaments to more than 25 international markets exceeded $140 million in 1996, constituting ten per cent of total exports, Mr. Matalka said.

The Jordanian pharmaceutical industry is export-oriented, with 70 per cent of production for export. However, Jordan imports 82 per cent of its pharmaceuticals from the European Union, he said.

"The existing Jordanian patent legislation grants protection to the process, not the end product," he noted, explaining that as long as the process is altered, the end product is considered legal in Jordan.

In preparing for the agreement, the Kingdom drafted a new patent law to conform to TRIPS. The latter stipulates protection for both the process and the end product, Mr. Matalka said.

The three-year grace period after the agreement goes into effect is too short for the industry to adapt in terms of training and upgrading, he said, which will affect Jordan's already-shrinking markets and products.

"Jordanian pharmaceutical companies will lose all the sales that could be generated from new products after the grace period is over," Mr. Matalka commented.

The Euro-Jordanian Association Agreement requires the gradual liberalisation of government procurement procedures, which translates into the abolishment of price-preferential treatment to local companies in government procurements.

"The Jordanian pharmaceutical industry stands to lose a 15 per cent price-preferential advantage," he concluded.

Also during the session, Abdel Ilah Abu Ayyash, advisor to the Minister of Tourism and Antiquities in Jordan, said the agreement touches upon three main issues in this domain: information, promotion, and technology.

Each year, 335 million tourists visit countries in the European Union (EU), accounting for more than half of the worldwide number of tourists, he said, adding that 14 million tourists visit the Middle East and one million visit Jordan annually.

"Jordan's proximity and accessibility to Europe give it an edge," Dr. Abu Ayyash stated. However, the tourism industry needs "peace of mind" and political stability, he said, adding that Jordan is working hard on a modern tourism industry.

Jordan should work on sustainable development policies, including the protection of the environment, and adequate infrastructure and facilities to encourage the flow of tourism, he stated.

Focus should be placed on employment policies for small and medium-size projects for the creation of intensive projects and activities, he suggested.

"We need training and education, particularly in hotel management and marketing strategies," he stressed.

Garrick Aird, director of International Tourism Development and a consultant to the EC, noted that the role of the government in tourism should support the private sector and not replace it.

It is important to forge a relationship between the private sector and the government so that the private sector has access to greater resources, he said.

The agreement integrates Jordan's tourism activities into the extensive and expanding European travel and tourism industry, he added.

"Tourism is a two-way business. It is highly interactive and inter-dependent," he remarked.

"Jordan boasts an enormous wealth of cultural heritage, but communicating that message requires effort and marketing investment," he said.

Mr. Aird echoed Dr. Abu Ayyash's comments and said that there is a need in Jordan to make tourism more competitive through the support of increased professionalism, particularly in hotel management.

The EU, Mr. Aird concluded, could help Jordan in joint activities, the encouragement of joint ventures, training and education, and the transfer of scientific and technological expertise.

In the afternoon session, a representative from the EU's Directorate General of Customs and Indirect Taxation fielded questions concerning the complexities of new "rules of origin" (ROI) to which Jordan will be subjected under the agreement.

Mr. Taylor, who negotiated the ROI terms with both Jordan and other countries in the region, underscored the difference between preferential trade rules and non-preferential trade rules.

The former apply to bilateral trade agreements, such as the one signed Monday between Jordan and the EU, while the latter are specific EC standards and rules that apply to the global community.

The ROI articles were a major stumbling block during negotiations, as Jordan, weak in natural resources, has a tendency to import components before exporting a final product, making the definition of an "originating product" — a qualifying term that allows customs exemptions for products exported to the EU — a difficult one.

"The concept of 'originating products' is governed by three principles," Mr. Taylor said. "They are: 'wholly obtained products', 'sufficiently transformed products', and cumulation'."

The first includes "goods originating in Jordan," indicating those goods are wholly obtained in the country, such as phosphate. Other, non-originating material has to be considered to have undergone "sufficient transformation," which is a reference to the processing of a good that "brings a substantial change to the product."

Mr. Taylor said Jordan and the EU have negotiated the "sufficient transformation" details on a product-by-product basis, creating a list nearly 100 pages long that outlines to what extent a product can "change" to be considered as no longer originating in Jordan.

Jordan, he said, has successfully negotiated for terms of 40 per cent value added, which means that a manufacturer contributes at least 60 per cent in processing to the final product.

At the same time, to take advantage of customs exemptions, manufacturers must also show that the value — measured in units — of non-originating components of any product do not exceed the value of originating components. This, he said, is a incentive not to "manipulate figures."

An electronics manufacturer, for example, could import all components for a product from Asia, but show that the product had undergone "sufficient transformation" en route to becoming a final product.

However, the details of export exemption may not be as complicated as they sound. Under the agreement, Jordan can add any inputs imported from Europe to its products and the product may still be considered as originating in Jordan and, as such, qualified to enter Europe with certain customs exemptions.

The seminar, hosted under the patronage of Minister of Trade, Industry and Supply Hani Mulki, concludes this afternoon following discussions on the impact of the Euro-Jordanian Association Agreement and Jordan's ascension to the WTO and their impact on the banking sector. Tunisia's experience with its own association agreement, and technical cooperation.

Yeltsin pardons Chubais, vows not to give him up

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin pardoned scandal-tainted First Deputy Prime Minister Anatoly Chubais Tuesday, vowing not to dump him despite a furore over lavish book fees he and four allies received.

"I won't give up Chubais. It's not even worth trying. The decision has been taken. He acknowledges there was a little mistake with the book fee," Mr. Yeltsin said as he sat with Mr. Chubais in the Kremlin, in a clip shown on Russian ORT television.

Mr. Chubais lost the Finance Ministry porfolio Thursday in the wake of the book scandal that cost three of his government allies their jobs. The fifth co-author of the book on privatisation, Alfred Kokh, is under criminal investigation for an earlier graft scandal.

Referring to the $90,000 fee Mr. Chubais received, Mr. Yeltsin said: "This is not illegal, it's not the criminal code, but it's a moral and ethical problem.

"The fact is, he has a senior post, so somebody may raise the fee to match his seniority. One needs to think about that. So I think Anatoly Borisovich (Chubais) made the very correct decision to transfer 95 per cent of the fee to charity."

In a bid to draw a line under the affair, Mr. Yeltsin joked with reporters: "I will write a third book — what will the journalists do to me?"

The journalists replied: "Read the book." During the meeting, Mr. Yeltsin said he had "a lot of complaints about the government," especially on the economic front, and would bear a report on its work over the past year on Dec. 1, Interfax news agency reported.

Mr. Chubais, the mastermind of Russia's mass privatisation, was replaced as finance minister by Mikhail Zadornov of the liberal opposition Yabloko faction, a fierce critic of Mr. Chubais' version of a new tax code and draft 1998 budget.

Last week, Mr. Yeltsin praised Mr. Chubais as an economic manager widely respected internationally.

The Communist and nationalist opposition in parliament has repeatedly demanded that Mr. Chubais be sacked, accusing him of having impoverished millions of Russians during the transition to a market economy.

Boris Nemtsov, the other first deputy prime minister, was not implicated in the book scandal but also lost his cabinet portfolio. However, he was able to name his successor at the energy ministry.

Mr. Yeltsin warned that there would be "a very serious discussion" about unresolved problems when the government presented its report on Dec. 1.

He instructed Mr. Chubais to prepare the report, as well as a decree to index pensioners' savings to protect them from inflation, a Kremlin statement said. The decree will affect whose born between 1917 and 1920.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin (right) talks to First Deputy Prime Minister Anatoly Chubais (Reuter photo)

Millions of Russians saw their savings decimated by the hyper-inflation unleashed after the government lifted price controls in 1992.

Mr. Yeltsin said that despite progress on stabilising the ruble and reining back inflation, the government was still failing to pay public sector wages on time.

He and Mr. Chubais discussed how the government would eliminate the wage debts by the target date of Jan. 1.

At a meeting of the powerful Security Council later, Mr. Yeltsin warned Mr. Nemtsov that the target date "must be met without fail, if the government wants to avoid negative consequences." Mr. Yeltsin told Mr. Chubais that there had been "progress on some macro-economic issues — that is a plus for the government." "But one must also take account of the fact that wage debts persist and we are still in the red where the international market and World Bank are concerned," he added.

He also singled out the ministry of foreign economic ties for criticism, saying the improvement in political relations with China and Japan was "much more substantial" than economic progress.

"What breakthrough has been achieved with China? In economic ties — none so far," he said.

Mr. Yeltsin visited China earlier this month, after a landmark summit with Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto in Siberia.

Tibet delegation refuses to meet critics, calls off London trip

LONDON (AFP) — A visit to London by a delegation headed by China's senior Tibetan official has been abandoned after it refused to accept British proposals to meet various groups critical of Beijing's policies in Tibet.

Foreign Office officials said Tuesday they were informed late Monday that the visit by Raidi, the top ethnic Tibetan in the Lhasa government for the Tibet Autonomous Region, due to begin Dec. 2, had been called off.

"We were putting together a programme for them in which we would have arranged for them to meet a range of people and views. In the end they decided they did not want to do that," said a spokesman.

Meetings were being planned with the Tibet Society, the Free Tibet campaign as well as parliamentary all-party groups on Tibet and China.

Campaigners for Tibetan independence welcomed the Britisb stand which was seen as reflecting the new "ethical" emphasis of Foreign Secretary Robin Cook.

Alison Reynolds of the Free Tibet campaign said: "We are extremely encouraged that they (British government) made these conditions. It is clear that despite wanting to come to London to put their point of view across, the delegation was not prepared to accept that there is an alternative point of view."

The Free Tibet movement lobbies on behalf of the Dalai Lama, who fled Tibet after a 1959 uprising was crushed by China and who now heads a government-in-exile.

It would have been the first official visit from Tibet since the Cultural Revolution of 1966-76. Its leader Raidi is regarded as a hardliner who played a leading role in the Cultural Revolution when Tibetan Buddhism was suppressed and many monasteries destroyed.

The visit would have come only days after the controversial Hollywood film "Seven Years in Tibet" opened in London which describes Tibet as an independent country. Delegation members have visas for Britain and could still come to London. A Chinese embassy official refused to comment Tuesday on its plans.

The foreign office spokesman said it was unlikely the delegation would now come to Britain since the object of the visit was to meet senior British officials.

The seven-member delegation would have included Lhagpa Phuntsog, a vice-governor and a former head of the Tibet Academy of Social Sciences, and Druhkhang Thubten Khedrub, a lama who heads the Religious Affairs Committee in Nagchum and who is a public critic of the Dalai Lama.

Walus insists Hani was only assassination target

MAMELODI, South Africa (AP) — An apartheid-era assassin denied again Tuesday that he once stalked Nelson Mandela and insisted the man he killed, popular black leader Chris Hani, was his only target.

Janusz Walus said he assassinated Hani, a charismatic African National Congress and Communist Party leader, on orders from Conservative Party lawmaker Clive Derby-Lewis and never planned to kill anyone else.

Mr. Walus and Mr. Derby-Lewis were convicted and given the death sentence, which was later abolished. Now serving life sentences, they are seeking amnesty for the killing from South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

George Bizos, a lawyer for the Hani family which opposes the amnesty petition, noted that Mr. Walus told police after his arrest that there were discussions of eliminating selected leaders of the ANC-Communist Party alliance other than Hani.

German students call for mass protest

BONN (AFP) — Striking German university students called Monday for a mass protest in Bonn, with organisers forecasting a turnout of more than 80,000 people.

The demonstration, planned for Thursday, would be the most powerful show of student power so far in a campaign that began in late October to protest against budget cuts, tuition fees, a dearth of teachers, overcrowded classrooms and outdated library catalogues.

All political parties have voiced understanding with the students' concerns, with the opposition Social Democrat Party (SPD) laying the blame squarely at the feet of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's government.

Mr. Kohl hit back, saying the root of the problem lay with regional governments, most of which are dominated by the SPD.

Dieter Hundt, head of the German Employers' Organisation, also expressed sympathy with the students, while proposing the introduction of tuition fees of between 1,000 and 1,500 marks per term and a stricter admissions policy.

The students are also demanding changes in the university grants system — currently based on parental tax payments — as well as an immediate increase in university development budgets, in which Germany ranked last in a recent OECD study.

The campaign began late October at Hesse University and spread quickly to other colleges across the country from Bonn to Berlin.

In a communiqué, Future Minister Juergen Ruetgers said the students had "some cause to protest," and called for a swift resolution of the problem that would avoid university budget cuts, despite the "tough financial situation" faced by the federal and regional governments.

The Future Ministry combines the former ministries of education and training, and research and technology.

Politicians look for ways out of impasse

NEW DELHI (AP) — India's ruling coalition and its main political backer Tuesday kept open the possibility of talks to end a political stalemate, although the prime minister refused to drop a governing partner as demanded by the Congress Party.

After four days, Prime Minister I.K. Gujral sent a formal letter to the Congress Party stating his refusal to eject the Dravida Progressive Front. The Congress believes the Dravida Progressive Front was partly responsible for the 1991 killing of Rajiv Gandhi, the Congress' leader and former prime minister.

Local news agencies reported Mr. Gujral's letter also suggested the two sides discuss ways out of the weeklong impasse.

A meeting of the Congress decision-making committee was scheduled Tuesday to decide on future action. The committee also met Monday night to read Mr. Gujral's letter, but made no immediate move to follow through on the threat to withdraw crucial support to the United Front coalition — leading those who favor a patch-up to believe that there is a way out of the crisis.

Withdrawal of support in parliament could mean the country would be forced into early elections, the second vote in less than two years.

At their own meeting Monday, United Front leaders decided to wait for Congress chief Sitaram Kesri's response to Mr. Gujral's letter before acting.

As prime minister, Mr. Gujral could ask the president to dissolve parliament and call for midterm polls — his term was to have ended in 2001. He could also resign, giving the presideot the option of inviting another party to form the government.

India's opposition leader and former Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee speaks with reporters after meeting President K.R. Narayanan (Reuter photo)

Despite their differences, the Congress and the United Front want to keep out the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the largest party in parliament who could be the winner if elections are held.

BJP leaders and their allies met with President K.R. Narayanan to discuss the situation Tuesday. Mr. Narayanan pledged to consult all parties before taking any action, United News of India news service reported.

As many as 45 first-time lawmakers from all parties met Mr. Narayanan Monday evening and urged him not to dissolve parliament and to explore the possibility of forming an alternative government, newspapers reported Tuesday.

The majority of those who met Mr. Narayanan were from the Congress, underlining the difference of opinion within the party on how to proceed.

Mr. Narayanan is reported to have told them to use their influence within their parties to arrive at a compromise.

Spacewalking astronauts capture satellite

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (AP) — Two spacewalking astronauts leaned over and grabbed a slowly spinning satellite with their gloved hands Monday night in a bold rescue that required more patience than strength.

After waiting an hour for the satellite to tilt the right way, NASA astronaut Winston Scott and Japanese astronaut Takao Doi reached out and, at the same moment, grasped opposite ends of the out-of-control satellite.

"Now that we've got it Mr. Doi, let's decide what we're going to do with it," Scott said in a lighthearted voice.

The men clung to the satellite as they tried to lower it into its cradle in the cargo bay. They couldn't get the satellite firmly down, however, so mission control ordered the cockpit crew to use the shuttle's robot arm.

Finally, more than three hours after the spacewalk began, the satellite was latched into the cargo bay and the crew's three-day ordeal was over. Initial tests showed the satellite to be in good shape.

"Fantastic work. Well done," mission control said.

The spacewalkers were safely back inside Columbia 7 1/2 hours after venturing out.

For the six crew members, there was more at stake than the $10 million reusable Spartan science satellite. It was a matter of pride — they accidentally sent the satellite into a slow tumble moments after releasing it Friday, and wanted nothing more than to set things right.

Commander Kevin Kregel reported a slight but clearly noticeable rotation of the Spartan satellite as he steered Columbia in for the 280-kilometre-high catch.

NASA's main concern was a collision between the satellite and either the shuttle or a spacewalker, although officials insisted the risk was extremely low.

The satellite had been released from the shuttle to spend two days studying the sun. But for reasons that are still unclear, it malfunctioned within moments. And when Columbia's crew tried to retrieve it with the shuttle robot arm, it started tumbling too quickly to be grabbed safely.

After three days of anxious separation, Columbia was back at Spartan's side a little over one hour into the spacewalk. By then, Scott and Doi had positioned themselves on opposite ends of a platform spanning the cargo bay, their feet secured in restraints and their bodies leaning back to avoid being struck by the 1,350-kilogramme satellite.

Kregel slowly steered Columbia up to Spartan as both spacecraft zoomed around Earth at 28,000 kmph, and positioned the shuttle in such a way that the satellite was between the spacewalkers.

And the waiting game began.

"We'll just be patient and see what happens," Scott said as the satellite loomed before him.

A few minutes later, Scott reported: "This position is perfect. the telescope is right between us."

A full hour passed before Scott announced that he and Doi were ready.

"OK. Are you ready? Standby, standby, capture," Scott said. "I've got my end."

Added Doi: "I've got my end."

Spartan — a 1.5-metre cube with a 51-cm diameter telescope tube protruding from opposite sides — was supposed to be tilted so that a telescope tube pointed straight at both spacewalkers. But it wouldn't point that way, and so Scott grabbed a protruding pin and Doi grasped one end of the tube.

The job called for perfect timing rather than brute strength; NASA said the catch required just 4 1/2 kilogrammes of force.

Once Spartan was anchored in the cargo bay, ground controllers conducted a series of checks to determine whether it might be feasible to send the satellite back out later in the 16-day mission.

The last time astronauts grabbed a satellite with their gloved hands was in 1992. Three spacewalks and three spacewalkers were needed to catch the slowly spinning communications satellite, which was three times the size of Spartan with no good places to grip.

This time, the job took less than half of a spacewalk, which was extended from six to seven hours to allow more time for space-station tests, including the successful debut of an extendible crane, some of the tests had to be scrapped to make room for the rescue effort.

Scott, 47, a navy officer, performed a spacewalk once before, in early 1996, to test new thermal wear.

Doi, 43, a Tokyo-born engineer, became the first Japanese spacewalker.

U.S. astronaut Winston Scott works on the cargo bay of the Space Shuttle Columbia, after recovering the Spartan spacecraft, a $10 million solar observatory that had escaped the grip of the shuttle's robot arm three days ago (Reuter photo)

Western men producing fewer sperm

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Sperm production by men in the United States and some European nations, has fallen over the last 60 years, according to a study released Monday in a National Institutes of Health publication.

The number of sperm per millilitre (0.03 fluid ounces) of semen has dropped 1.5 per cent per year over the last six decades in the United States and twice as fast in Europe, according to study author Shanna Swan.

A similar study yielded no conclusive results in Asia, South America and the rest of the world, Ms. Swan reported in the latest issue of the Environmental Health Perspectives monthly.

"My hope is, this study will change the question of concern from if there is a decline, to why there is a decline" said Ms. Swan, chief of the reproductive epidemiology section at the California Department of Health.

The drop parallels a rise in cancers and birth defects afflicting male reproductive organs, such as — in the United States — hypospadias, in which the urethra opens beneath the penis and not at its extremity, she said.

The cause of the fall has not yet been determined, Ms. Swan reported, but experiments on some laboratory animals have shown that sperm levels drop when a foetus in the mother's womb is exposed to certain chemicals.

Thailand to manufacture second anti-AIDS drug

BANGKOK (AFP) — Thailand will next month start manufacturing the second anti-AIDS drug to be made domestically, as the state strives to expand medication for its tens of thousands of sufferers, officials and reports said.

The government pharmaceutical organisation will in December begin manufacturing the anti-retroviral drug didanosine (DDI), in a bid to make the internationally-used drug more cheaply available, a Thai official said.

"We have to maximise the use of our budget and at the same time make necessary drugs available to the public," Viput Poolchareon, the AIDS division director of the Ministry of Health was quoted as saying by the Bangkok Post.

An estimated 800,000 Thais have contracted the HIV virus which can lead to full-blown AIDS, while another 60,000 suffer undiagnosed HIV or AIDS symptoms.

The ministry plans to add other drugs used by HIV and AIDS patients to its essential drugs list to help Thais get them under state welfare schemes.

Currently the only anti-retroviral drug listed is AZT, which is already being produced by the government pharmaceutical organisation.

DDI was developed by a U.S. firm, but its patent for the drug in Thailand has lapsed, allowing local companies to manufacture it, officials said.

In a separate development the government is also considering letting hospitals receive donations of powdered milk directly from manufacturers, to feed infants born to HIV-positive mothers, the Post reported.

Thailand has previously barred such donations in an effort to encourage breastfeeding.

Mr. Viput said with a budget of only 10 million baht ($250,000) the government could only afford formula milk for about 10 per cent of children born to HIV-positive mothers, mostly in the north of the country.

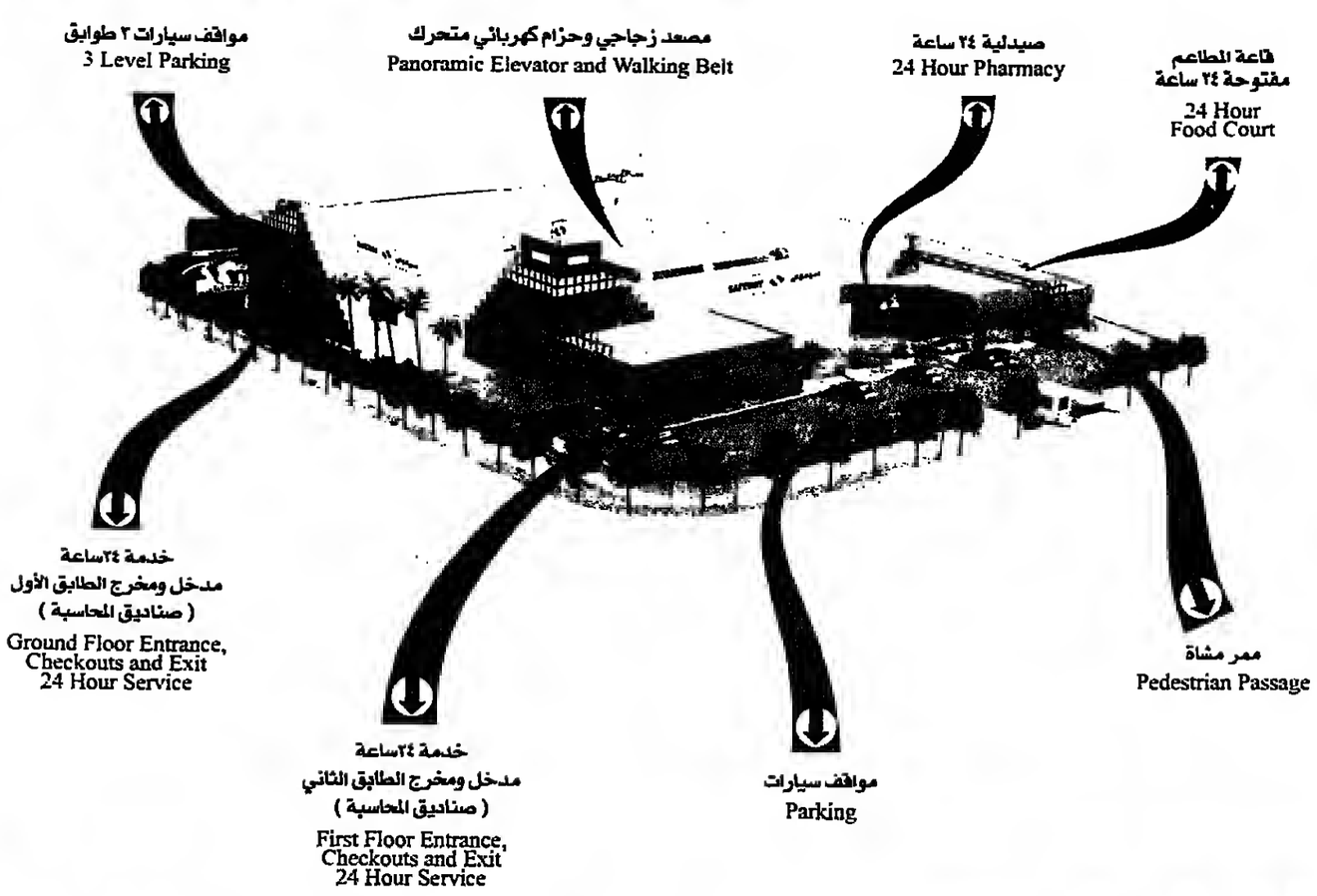
According to a United Nations report last year, some two per cent of Thai women attending antenatal clinics were carrying the HIV virus which can lead to full-blown AIDS.

It was forecast that by 2000, about 63,000 children under the age of 15 will be HIV-positive and 47,000 will die of AIDS.

The Health Ministry said Monday that it had recorded 100,000 Thais — more than three quarters of them men — infected with HIV or with AIDS. Some seven per cent of the HIV-sufferers were under 18 years old, a statement said.

Thailand, which has a large number of commercial sex workers, has succeeded in stemming overall infection rates in recent years through public education campaigns.

ALL ROADS LEAD TO SAFEWAY



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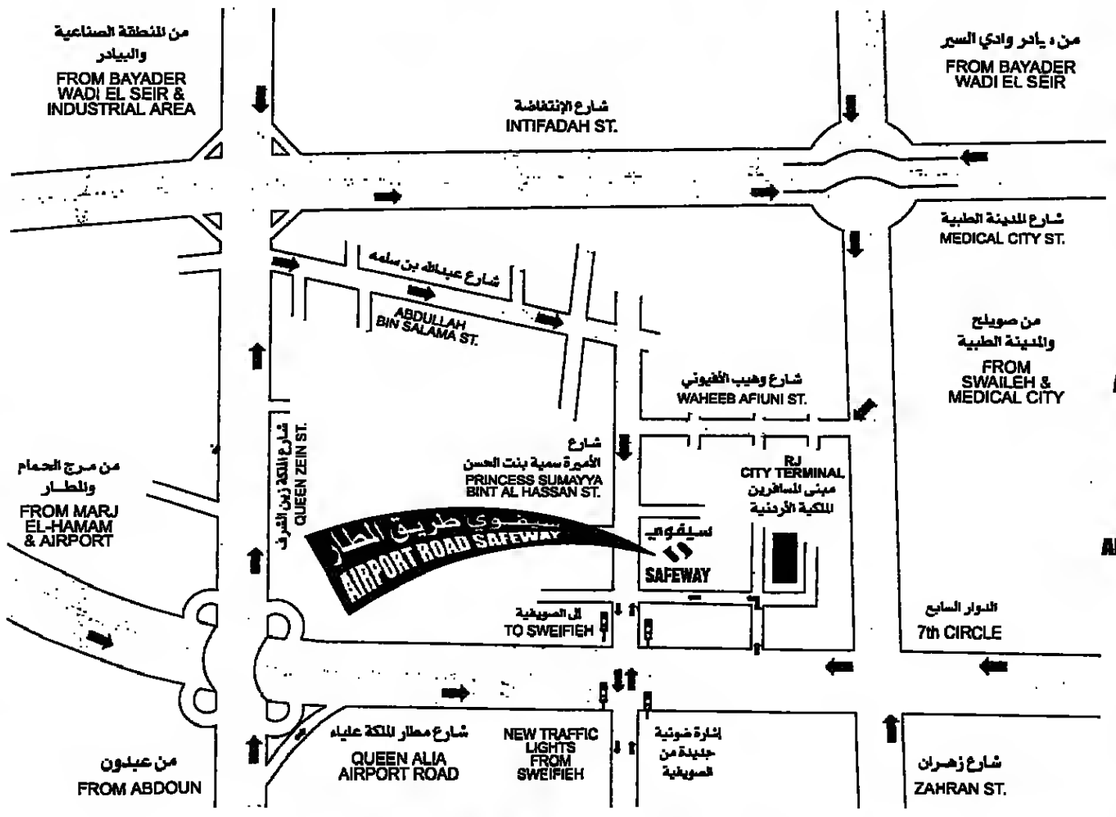

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Helping jobless and poor

THE RECENT finding by the University of Jordan's Centre for Strategic Studies that there is a high level of unemployment in the country should tell us something about what the priorities of the newly-elected Parliament might be. The survey portrays a gloomy picture of poverty in the country. It reveals that the unemployment figure is up to 27 per cent, far more than hitherto publicly recognised. Of this group of people, the young generation is the most affected where the jobless rate among them reaches over 50 per cent.

The findings lead us to believe that there is indeed much more that needs to be done to alleviate poverty and unemployment in the country. If half of our youth cannot or will not find jobs, then something is terribly wrong with our planning, economic development or even our social value system. A major challenge that still lies ahead is the ongoing trend to support privatisation, deregulation and globalisation in the pursuit of our economic development. In a country where unemployment is so high and many people live under the poverty line, there is a limit to how much we should be pursuing a free market economy without paying due attention to the welfare of the people. Labour-intensive business activities run counter to market economy norms and standards but may be necessary in states where their economic conditions are such that require a deviation from strict application of profit and loss criteria. Till our country is able to stand on its own feet, by solving the high rate of unemployment and poverty, we should be thinking long and hard about the blind pursuit of market economy criteria. At the same time, given the high rate of unemployment, we should prescribe a reasonable minimum wage for our employees. Leaving the determination of wages to market forces would render labourers and employees defenceless. There is no sense in only providing jobs if the wages remain so low as to prevent a decent standard of life.

The upcoming session of the new Parliament should be called upon to focus its attention on domestic concerns be they economic, social or otherwise. Unemployment and poverty are obviously the most pressing issues facing us.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Nazih criticised the Ministry of Labour for talking a great deal about addressing the problem of non-Jordanian workers and the local labour market, but doing little about this problem. In the past few months, the ministry said that it had exerted efforts to deal with the presence of significant numbers of guest workers who hold jobs that could go to unemployed Jordanians, but later announced that it succeeded only in solving 50 per cent of the problem, said the writer. He said everyone can see that foreign workers are filling jobs in almost all sectors and businesses and their numbers, according to the ministry's estimates, run into tens of thousands. These guest workers are depriving Jordanians of making a living and they are the source of low wages, said the writer, adding that the employers are naturally satisfied with the low wages as this serves their own interest. But, he said, Jordanian workers who refuse such low wages are deprived of employment opportunities thus further aggravating the unemployment problem. The writer partly blamed the ministry which is not enforcing the Labour Law and partly on the employers and business owners, whom, he said, seem to be indifferent to this very serious problem facing the society.

Al Dustour's Mohammad Daoud criticised the Ministry of Education for delaying school maintenance work on until winter, when students are in classes, instead of conducting the work during the summer vacation. At least six schools within the Amman Governorate require urgent maintenance, but it was only this week that workers showed up to do the work, said Daoud. The delay, he said, forced the ministry to transfer students to other schools, where they were forced into classes with other students on the two-shift systems. No matter how hard the ministry tries to find excuses for this delay, it cannot convince anyone of the shortcomings of its senior employees who are supposed to be well-informed about any situation and the needs of the schools, the writer charged. He said the ministry's failure to shoulder its responsibility could be due to lack of coordination between the school administration and the central authority at the ministry or to the slow procedures and routine which holds back the work.

Washington Watch

By Dr. James Zogby

A reassessment is under way

AS EVENTS of the past few weeks have made clear, the twin pillars of U.S.-Middle East policy (the Arab-Israeli peace process and the dual containment of Iran and Iraq) are in trouble. It has now become imperative for the U.S. to reassess its approach to the region and reformulate its policy. The existing policy was based on too limited a view of the political dynamics in the region and some assumptions that, I believe, have now been found to be flawed.

For example, for domestic political reasons, the U.S. attempted to construct the peace process using a framework that ruled out both direct U.S. input and the use of any direct U.S. public pressure on Israel. Since there was an asymmetry of power in the region between Israel and its Arab negotiating partners, the asymmetry of U.S. pressure (applied, at times, only to the Arab side, but not to Israel) resulted in a deformed process. Absent balanced pressure, in order to succeed the process required mutual goodwill and a recognition by all the parties of each other's respective needs.

After languishing for months under a Shamir-led Likud government, which really had no will to move the process forward, the process was resumed by the Labour government of Yitzhak Rabin. But all was still not well with the peace effort. In order to stave off challenges from their anti-peace opposition, both Rabin and his successor Shimon Peres, at times, required displays of U.S. pressure. This would have helped them to steer a more direct course towards implementation of the peace accords. But needed U.S. balancing pressure was not forthcoming.

Rabin's assassination and the defeat of the Labour government have virtually ended all movement in the peace process. The Netanyahu government has amply demonstrated its refusal to accept the premises on which the process was based or to implement its provisions. Since the process was left to the goodwill of the participants, in the absence of goodwill, the process began to unravel.

While the White House is still averse to the use of direct public pressure, it is clear that a reassessment is under way. The White House used some pressure to press for a Hebron agreement, and following Secretary Albright's visit to the region, the White House has continued to send unmistakable signs of displeasure to the Netanyahu government. It was no accident that the president did not meet with the Israeli prime minister during his recent visit, he did find the opportunity to meet with King Hussein. And just this weekend the president hosted a White House luncheon for Shimon Peres, Leah Rabin and 100 Arab American and Jewish American leaders. At that event, the president forcefully laid out the underlying principles of the peace process including his call for a "time out," an Israeli redeployment and confidence-building measures to improve the Palestinian economy. The address was carried live on U.S. and Israeli television.

In part, the White House has been compelled to move in this more forceful direction both to save a floundering peace process and in an effort to restore badly needed support in the broader Arab World.

The degree of Arab alienation from the U.S. was brought home in the past few weeks by their absence from the Doha Economic Summit and by their resistance to the use of any military solution to the standoff with Iraq.

Not only did the U.S.' major Arab allies urge restraint in the confrontation with Iraq, but many have begun to call for an end or, at least, an easing of the economic sanctions regime that has been in effect against that country since the end of the Gulf war.

Yet a further blow to the U.S. will come next month, if, as expected, the majority of Arab states, including important U.S. allies, attend the Islamic summit in Tehran.

In some ways, dual containment was not a policy but the absence of a policy. Iran is one of the region's most populous states. While many Arab states are threatened by not only the current policies of the Iranian government but its long-term strategic ambitions as well, they know that it is not possible to isolate Iran from the region.

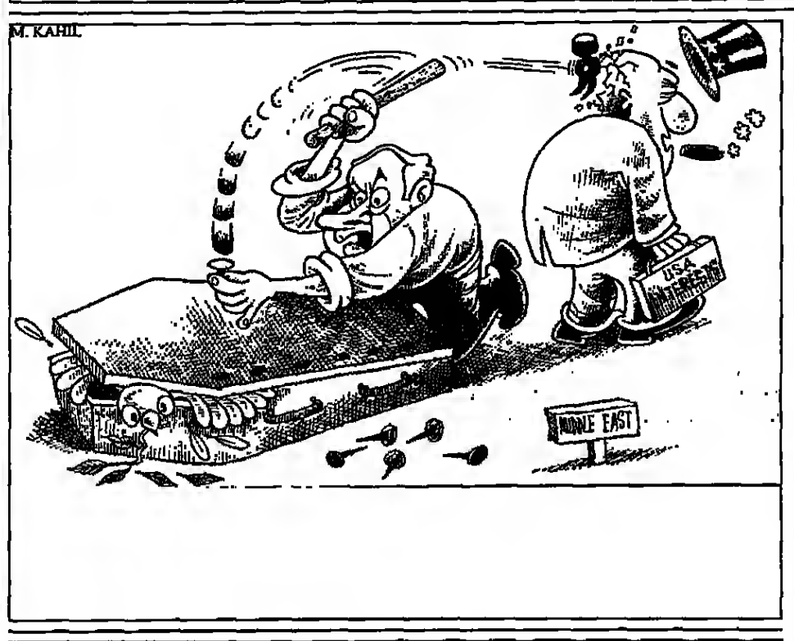
Iraq is not viewed as a long-term threat. What is of concern regarding Iraq is the current regime. The sanctions programme has not damaged the rule of Saddam Hussein or weakened his hold. On the contrary, it has created a resentment and a bitterness both in Iraq itself and among many in the Arab World who have become horrified at the staggering toll that sanctions have taken on the innocent people of that country.

The U.S. efforts to isolate Iran and punish Iraq are floundering in the Arab World in part because both goals are undefined and both are now being questioned in the face of Israeli intransigence in the peace process.

It was significant that the U.S. worked with its Security Council partners to find a way to defuse the Iraqi standoff. It is also important to note that while the U.S. remains resolute that weapons inspectors have unimpeded access and all U.N. Security Council resolutions be enforced, there may be forthcoming an increase in humanitarian aid and a more clearly defined path for Iraq to find its way out of the current complete sanctions regime.

What recent events have made clear is that in the absence of a realistic strategy, realising those goals can be frustrating. The stalled peace process, the dismal attendance at Doha, the tattering of the Gulf war coalition, growing Arab restiveness over the conditions of the Iraqi people, and the crumbling of regional support for the dual containment policy have all brought home to the U.S. the need to reassess its approach to the Middle East. There are some recent signs that point to the changes that are underway, but more elaboration will be required in the months to come.

M. KAHIL



LETTERS

This time 'they're right'

To the Editor:

I WOULD like to refer to the general attitude regarding the Iraqi-U.N. situation and more specifically the article by Mr. Khouri yesterday "historical and hormonal imperatives in the American-Iraqi face-off."

As an Englishman recently arrived and now living in Jordan I feel compelled to point out that the average Englishman (contrary to what my government might portray) is usually sceptical and cynical of American motives and methods when dealing with international crises.

However, in this latest episode of Iraq vs. U.N./U.S./U.K. I believe they are completely right. The crisis was apparently prompted by the recent discovery of a substantial biological weapons site and Mr. Hussein's subsequent expulsions of U.N. inspectors. Much has been made of America's reaction but little has been said of what the inspectors were about to uncover. Perhaps then we should pause for a moment and ask ourselves if we still want Mr. Hussein to be producing and stockpiling biological and chemical weapons?

If no, why is there an uproar when America is willing to do something about it on behalf of the U.N.

If yes, continue criticising and stifling the U.N. until....

Because America is the only one firmly committed to upholding the U.N. resolutions, that does not mean they are necessarily wrong. It may be hormonal and historical imperial self-assertion, but is that any worse than blindness and cowardice? After all, if the international community had shown consistent determination since the Gulf war Mr. Hussein would not have been able to continually manipulate the weak, instead there would have been no option but to comply. Now as he exploits everyone's division, indecision and avarice one more time his latest abuse will go unpunished and sadly the U.N. has been tarnished again. He is now being allowed to dictate terms and consequently, at the very least, stockpile weapons of mass human destruction.

Unfortunately Iraq will continue to hide its weapons as the world continues it flawed, illogical and naive attitude to Mr. Hussein and I hope America will continue it's Lone Ranger policy in spite of international criticism. It may seem futile and imbecilic to those who can no longer be bothered to do anything, but where would we all be if we had the same attitude? In Yugoslavia for example, many times the U.N. failed embarrassingly as weakness and naivete were exploited by the various parties. In the end though, a long term peace has hopefully been achieved.

Depressingly then we will watch this occur many times again in the years to come but more depressingly Mr. Hussein's ability to play the international community like an instrument will grow as will his arsenal.

For the Iraqi people, I wish they could truly know how we are all revolted by their needless and incredible suffering.

I wish they could truly know that if their leader complied to the letter and spirit of the U.N. resolutions, it would be a relatively straightforward technical issue to resolve, i.e., the continuation and expansion of the oil-for-food programme of which the whole region would benefit.

Finally I would like to ask: is it correct to criticise the U.N., U.S. and the U.K. on the basis that they are not getting it right elsewhere? I feel perfectly justified in criticising their Israeli policies and I am thoroughly ashamed that no one is doing anything about the daily acts of Dark Age brutality in Algeria. Yet I will not criticise their stance on Iraq, for whatever their reason, I believe they are doing something right.

Perhaps if the Arab states showed a bit more strength and determination we would see how weak and dependent the U.S. and U.K. could be.

Lawrence J. Dearing
Amman

The Ottawa Convention

A 'true victory for humanity'

By Cornelio Sommaruga

GENEVA — Imagine a world in which civilians in post-conflict communities do not fear stepping outside their homes once the warring parties have laid down their arms. Imagine a world in which people can plow land, gather water and wood, sow crops in peace. Imagine a world in which the war wounded receive the lifelong care and assistance they truly need.

On Dec. 3, representatives of more than 120 governments will take the first step towards making such a world when they sign a treaty banning anti-personnel mines.

During the past two decades, the widespread and indiscriminate use of land mines has resulted in a humanitarian disaster in which civilians have been the primary victims, if not always the main targets. No one knows how many innocent men, women and children have been killed or maimed by land mines. Many die in isolation, unable to reach the medical care that can save them. Stemming the epidemic of wounds provoked by the use of mines requires that these weapons be outlawed once and for all.

The Ottawa Convention marks a historic moment in the development of international humanitarian law, also known as the law of armed conflict. Never before has a weapon in such widespread use been totally prohibited. That such a treaty even exists bears witness to the determination of more than 1,000 non-governmental organisations worldwide, other international organisations including the United Nations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and dozens of governments from around the world.

It reflects the influence of international public opinion in setting limits on what is acceptable, even in time of war. It is a visible sign that humanity is not powerless in the face of destructive technology.

Regrettably, a few major governments will not sign the treaty in Ottawa. At the treaty negotiations in Oslo in September, the temptation was strong to weaken the prohibitions to allow governments more time, or more opportunity, to use anti-personnel mines, and thus to encourage those in doubt to sign on. But, the overwhelming majority of governments realised that an effective global ban required a truly effective treaty: "No exceptions, no reservations and no loopholes," in the words of Nobel Peace Prize winner Jody Williams.

History has shown us that prohibitions on the use of specific weapons, such as poison gas and exploding and expanding bullets, are rarely universally agreed upon from the beginning. But with time, these prohibitions have been accepted and respected by all. I truly believe that the same will occur with land mines. Already, the principle that the international community's ultimate objective should be a total ban on anti-personnel mines is almost universally supported.

An enormous amount of work remains to be done. Governments outside the Ottawa process must be brought on board as soon as possible. Millions of anti-personnel mines must be cleared from fields civilians long to start farming again. Millions more must be taken from stockpiles and detonated in safety. And thousands of mine amputees, the vast majority of whom have been sadly neglected, will require a lifetime of rehabilitative care and assistance to restore their dignity and to ensure a chance for social reintegration.

The Ottawa Treaty has made these distant challenges realistic aand achievable. We must simply see our commitment through until the end.

The success of the international campaign against land mines shows that public opinion and human perseverance should never be underestimated or ignored. The Ottawa Treaty to ban land mines is truly a victory for humanity.

The writer is president of the International Committee of the Red Cross. This comment is reprinted from the International Herald Tribune.

IT OCCURRED TO ME...

Fine madness

By Ali Kassay

QUITE SOME time ago, Jordan Televisinn treated its viewers to a documentary on mad cow disease, which, I must adnit, was quite well put together, albeit not scintillating material to the casual viewer. My mother, for instance, who makes no claim to being a keen zoologist nor a veterinarian, curled up in her easy chair and went to sleep, as she does on most nights when television is on.

Her snooze, which often lasts until the national anthem, came to an abrupt end when an official appeared on the screen and assured the public solemnly that contaminated beef will never make its way into our country. As he started his declaration my mother sat upright, listened attentively to his words, then she turned to me and said: "Do not buy beef any more until this matter blows over."

And it has, or at least I thought so, until the other day when I walked into the office of a friend of mine and found him muttering to himself: "Blasted mad cow disease!"

You see, I have known this fellow since we were both children, and he has never particularly cared one way or another for cows, regardless of their level of sanity, except perhaps to eat them on occasions which, as far as I knew, his doctor still permitted him to do. So why did he sit there with knotted brow, staring fixedly at a sheet of paper, and muttering about animals in which, under normal circumstances, his interest would have to grow to be even cursory ?

Discounting the possibility that he may have been miraculously converted into a bovine rights activist, I could see that there loomed before me a mystery that defied solution and I asked him what the story was.

"Read this." He said, offering me the sheet of paper that he had been clutching in his hand. It was a fax message containing a list of organic chemicals, probably foodstuffs if the residues of organic chemistry that still linger in my memory serve me right, but it offered me no clue to the cause of his consternation. "This is most interesting," I said. "But what has it to do with mad cow disease ?"

"Exactly. Do you see my point ?" He exclaimed, but I had to disappoint him since I did not. Only then did his distraught state of mind permit him to martial his thoughts and begin his story from the beginning. "These are the components of paprika and tomato ketchup that I import. They are made from vegetables, and I have certificates that they do not contain any animal nor dairy products, nor have they come in contact with any such products, contaminated or otherwise. Suddenly, I am told that I cannot clear them through customs unless I produce a certificate that they have been tested for mad cow disease and declared safe. But the producer assures me that there are no such tests for vegetables, and I am stuck in the middle, paying through the nose."

This was too technical, but still I offered a solution. "Why not have the producer run the test on this stuff anyway and send you the results ?" I proposed. He followed my advice, and soon after received a response from the producer, who proposed instead running an international test for mad civil servant's disease.

Latest excavations deepen our knowledge of early Islamic urban transformations at Aqaba

By Rami G. Khouri
Special to the Jordan Times

A ONE-month excavation earlier this year by an American-Jordanian team at the early Islamic town of Ayla, along the north shoreline of Aqaba, has unearthed more information on the complex sequence of settlements that defined the town's history during the first Islamic ceoturies. It has provided rich new evidence for changes in urban concepts during this important period of Middle Eastern history. It also poses a major challenge io contemporary Jordan's capacity to protect its ancient heritage and to blend it with new tourism projects.

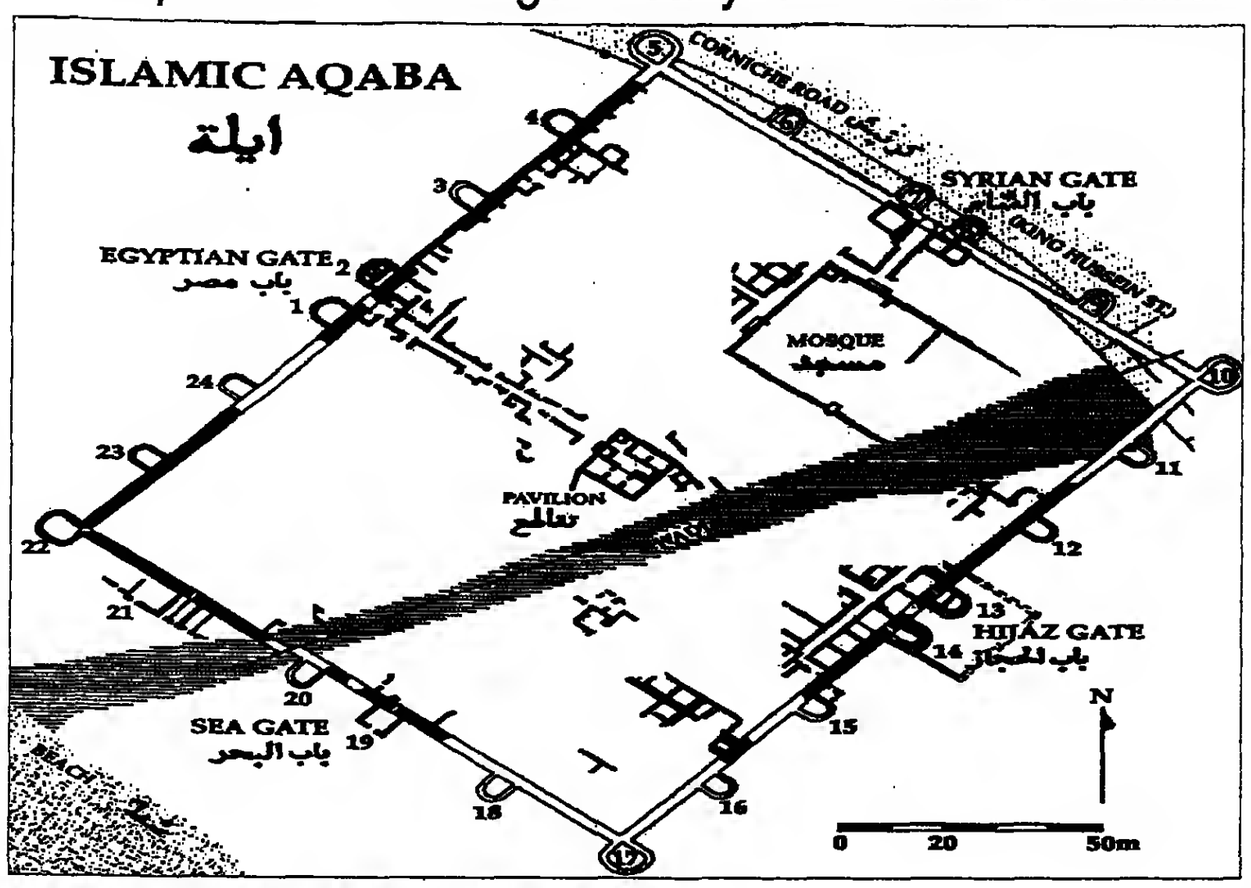
The site of Ayla has been excavated since 1986 by a team sponsored hy the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute and headed by Dr. Donald Whitcomb, in cooperation with the Jordanian Department of Antiquities. This year's dig was directed in the field by Sawsan Fakhry, the Department of Antiquities representative in Aqaba.

The work of the past decade has documented the hroad outlines of the history of the ancient city, which lasted around 450 years. It was founded around 650 AD (just south-east of the earlier Roman-Byzantine town), flourished as a trading port through the Umayyad (661-750 AD) and Abbasid (750-970 AD) periods, declined gradually during the Faümid period (970-1171 AD), suffered a serious earthquake in 1068, and was sacked hy the Crusader Baldwin I of Jerusalem in 1116 AD.

The early Islamic city founded around 650 AD was a rectangle that measured some 170 x 145 metres, and was surrouoded hy a 2.6-metre-thick stone city wall with four gates and a series of towers. The four gates gave onto main streets that met in the centre of the city at a tetrapylon, or four-sided covered arch that formed the intersection of two major streets (similar to the one at the oorth end of Jerash). The initial city plan resembled a typical late Roman legionary fortress, hut soon after evolved to reflect the urban ideas of the new Islamic culture.

Ayla was a misr (plural: amsar), one of the new early Islamic towns that were founded immediately after the first Islamic cooquests, usually adjacent to earlier Roman and Byzantine towns. This is the case at Aqaha, as well as at Fustat (Cairo), Istakhr (Iran), and other places in the Middle East. Ayla may be the best preserved misr known today, and thus may clarify aspects of early Islamic urbanism that bave never been well documented elsewhere.

The pre-Islamic Byzantine town bad already entered the Islamic spbere in 630, when the town's Christian bishop Yuhanna ibn Ru'ba made a treaty with the Prophet Mohammad to secure the town's safety. The Caliph Omar visited that town (called Aila or Aelana) in 638, the same year that the Muslim forces won the Battle of Yarmouk in north Jordan and swept into the Levant. The Byzantine town at Aqaba was not sacked because it submitted to the Islamic forces, and after 650 AD it continued to exist alongside the new Islamic town that was establisbed virtually adjacent to it. (The Roman-Byzantine town bas been recently identified and is being excavated by another American-led team).



The town plan of Aqaba/Ayla in the early-middle Islamic era

The 1997 dig

This year's excavation coocentrated on the south-western part of the town, nearest to the shoreline. Just 20 centimetres beneath the remains of an asphalt layer laid hy the British earlier this century Ms. Fakhry's team uncovered remains of an ancient wall. Wheo this was further explored the area outside the sea gate was found to have included a double range of large rooms on either side of an apparent street. This area also included at least four large clay cooking ovens (called tawabeen in Arabic: singular, tabun) placed against the city wall, between smaller walls that jutted out perpendicularly from the city wall. These structures were all dated to the Abbasid era, when a square fortificatioo tower was redesigned as a shop during the late 8th Century AD. Another shop was uncovered outside the city's south wall and six more shops were found in a row along the south-west section of the wall.

(As the ancient tawabeen that probably belonged to a bakery that served visitors entering the city were uncovered, a few metres away the new Royal Yacbt Club was just finishing its swimming pool with an outdoor barbecue that includes an oven for baking fresh bread for visitors — directly opposite its ancient counterpart from about a thousand years ago.)

This new information confirms that the city wall, at least along the sborefront in the south part of the city, was not designed primarily for defensive purposes, but rather served mainly as a backdrop for the sbops along the waterfront (the water is about 50 metres away from the city wall).

Excavation this year focused on the area near the main gate in the south wall, the Sea Gate, through whicb passed most of Ayla's maritime imports from China, India, Iraq and other trading partners. Excavations bere revealed the same historical sequence as that documeoted at the better preserved Egypt Gate on the west wall (the Egypt Gate is the one that has been restored and is easily visited, with its adjoining towers and long stretch of city wall. In fact, visitors can now walk through the Egypt Gate and stroll along an Abbasid era street inside Ayla).

The South Gate excavation documented three main phases of the city's life, during which the once monumental gate was made smaller in line with the town's declining socio-economic fortunes. The last phase, from the late Fatimid era, is a small, simple doorway about the size of a large room door today.

The excavation of the area directly inside the Sea Gate (today within the grounds of the Yacht Club) revealed some ancient secondary streets, each flanked by rooms and buildings on both sides. The area inside the Sea Gate was full of late Abbasid/early Fatimid cultural remains from around the mid-10th Century AD (fine luster ceramics, glass weights, and Chinese porcelains). A mound in this area also revealed cultural remains that are very typical of Iraqi-style "Mahesb" material, dating from the transition from the Umayyad to the Abbasid eras (mid-8th Century AD).

These cultural deposits suggest the following intriguing theory, Dr. Whitcomb said in a recent interview here: After the massive earthquake damage of 747/48 AD, the newly installed Abbasid government committed itself to a massive programme to restore the town's prosperity and population size.

An Abbasid era workers' village made mostly of mudbrick structures sprung up north of the walled town (near the bus station, across the road from the restored wall and tower, in the area being excavated by the other American team). The workers, possibly immigrant Iraqi labourers, lived in this temporary village while the main walled town of Ayla was being rebuilt with a new town plan. The rebuilt Abbasid era town included the mosque and colonnaded secoodary streets that have been excavated within the walls in the past two seasons of digging.

Reconstructing early Islamic urbanism

Beneath the levels of early Abbasid and Mahesh wares excavated this year, Ms. Fakhry's team also uncovered lower, older alignments of buildings and streets, slightly off the alignment of the rebuilt Abbasid-Mahesb town. Sbe said in an interview with the Jordan Times that this part of the city bas clarified the earliest Umayyad architecture at Ayla, while also starting to reveal the earliest Islamic (Rashidin) ideas of urbanism. Thus, the Ayla excavation is providing data of unprecedented quality that allows archaeologists and historians to reconstruct — layer-by-layer, and sometimes decade-by-decade — the changes in town planning concepts during the Umayyad-Abbasid-Fatimid eras.

Sucb cbanges are visible in the earliest phases of the walled town, wben the first generations of Muslims soon after 650 AD transformed the design and function of some colonnaded secondary streets that were probably first designed by local architects and engineers wbo reflected Roman-Byzantine urban traditions. In the north-east and southern sections of the city, there is evidence for colonnaded streets having had their colonnades filled in to form shops or other kinds of rooms of irregular shapes and sizes. Sucb reconfigurations happened during at least four phases of construction during the first century after 650 AD.

There is also some evidence to suggest that duriog this period one of the city's main gates was blocked and the area outside it was transformed into a cemetery — as evidenced also at other early Islamic towns in the Middle East. Such evidence for architectural transformations is complemented by artifacts that help document the changing fortunes of the city's inhabitants, especially the decline during the Fatimid period.

Structures outside the walls

Soundings hy Ms. Fakhry this year and in 1996 also confirmed the presence of Abbasid era structures in several areas outside the city walls, especially towards the west and north, where a oew hotel is being built. Substantial stone walls north-west of the city probably belong to a suburban expansioo of the town in the Abbasid era (750-970 AD). The street from the Egypt Gate continues outside the city wall and passes through an open area (some 50m. wide) before encountering stone and brick buildings. Most structures are from the Ahbasid and Fatimid eras, including a possihle small mosque.

Nearby, on the proposed site of a new restaurant near the beach, Ms. Fakhry uncovered the remains of a large building complex that was partly used for storage. It is likely that the entire beachfront area south and west of the walled city served as a public suq, or marketplace, and thus storehouses and khans are likely still to be recovered from beneath the sand. The area outside the walls holds out the rare prospect of uncovering the remains of a typical medieval town, which would be of enormous value to medieval historians. This further heightens the impprtance of carefully preserving the ancient structures and incorporating them into the modern botel, marina and other tourism-oriented facilities being built throughout Aqaba.

A truly bi-national effnrt

A noteworthy aspect of this year's dig, unlike all the previous seasons at Ayla, is that it was a truly bi-national venture in which American and Jordanian archaeologists, technicians and field workers worked together closely on all operational aspects of the dig, including the goals for the season, the areas to be excavated, the methodology employed, and the interpretation of results. This joint approacb also has the advantage of the Jordanian teams working throughout the year, unlike the international teams wbo typically visit for 6-8 weeks once every year or even every two years. The local capabilities will also be extended to year-round work wben a processing laboratory to study and conserve the excavated artifacts is set up at the Department of Antiquities offices in Aqaba Castle.

The excavations will continue next year, with a focus on exposing larger areas within the walled town. One of the most satisfying aspects of the Ayla project has been the close coordination and cooperation among all the concerned parties in the area for the purpose of protecting the most important antiquities and blending them in with landscaping designs for the new facilities; the key partners in this respect have been the Departmeot of Antiquities, the Aqaba Region Authority, the Royal Yacht Club, and the private sector owners of the land where the new complex of hotel, chalets and restaurant is being built.

Dissent, '90s style

Agitators e-mail their messages anonymously

By Carroll Bngert
and Michael Laris

"NO DISSIDENTS known to be active." So concluded the U.S. State Department in its 1996 report on China's buman-rights record. But that was before Tunnel, China's new dissideot e-mail magazioe, got its start last June. Editors work in secret, somewbere in China, and e-mail texts to a cyberaddress in the United States. From there the journal is e-mailed back into China, and the editors' origins remain unknown.

Tunnel's essays pull no punches. Its editors complain that Cbina's "brigbt side" receives nauseatingly extensive coverage in the official media, while "we believe that the people's right to understand includes the right to know about the 'black side.'" Receot issues bave lambasted the "rigid aod rotten" Chinese leadership, analysed the 1959-61 famine in detail (identifying responsible local officials by name) and bemoaned China's "cultural disintegration." Many of the authors, not surprisingly, publish under the byline Temporarily Aoonymous.

Dissidents like Wei Jingsheng, who has been released into exile after nearly 19 years of imprisonment, didn't have the luxury of hiding their identities. When Wei and his comrades plastered up their "big cbaracter" posters on Democracy Wall in 1978, the Chinese government never had much doubt about who the culprits were or bow to track them down. But in the 1990s, critics of the government can spread their message much farther, much faster — with less fear of prosecution. Within the past year at least half a dozen political journals, including Tunnel, have signed up thousands of subscribers. "Our programme can bandle millions of addresses to deliver messages," a U.S.-based activist connected to Tunnel said in an e-mail interview. "Technically, we have the upper band in fighting Internet censorship in China."

Beijing says it wants to control access to tbe "negative aspects" of the Internet, and it has tbe capability to browse througb any e-mail account. But it may not have the manpower. Some 500,000 Chinese are now online, and every major city is busy establishing its own gateway into the global network. Students, meanwhile, are wiring themselves into free university networks, with or witbout permission. "So many people approacbed me to start Internet-based businesses," says Timothy Wendt a Cbinese specialist at the Columbia Institute for Tele-ioformatioo. "It was obvious on my last trip that people in cities were getting linked up." Frustrated with government efforts to jam its radio signal, the Voice of America launcbed a Chinese e-mail news service on Oct. 1. Io the first month, 1,000 subscribers signed up.

The government would love to crack down on distributors. "The Chinese authorities may charge you with a crime for redistributing any information they consider to be not appropriate," warns VIP Reference, a Cbinese cyberjournal edited in the U.S. "Let us do the distribution work." But simply receiving e-mail does not seem to provoke the regime's ire. Some Chinese recipients of Tunnel say that they started receiving the magazine without actually subscribing to it, which gives them a convenient dodge. "I didn't ask for it, so it's not my responsibility," says one Cbinese intellectual. Democracy Wall required the public, in-your-face act of putting a poster. Tunnel is quieter and more private, but in the eod it may not he any less subversive.

Newsweek

Homework could use some discipline and spicing up

By Richard Tanner

WHEN I VISIT student homes I'm amazed to see workbooks scattered over the dining room tables. I have friends whose children seem to start their homework at 7:30 p.m. on Friday sitting before the holy shrine (the television). Neither of these represents the besl of places or times to do serious study. Given the wealth of places like West Amman, the spaciousness of modern homes against smaller ones, the availability of books and videos, inter-active computer programmes and eveo pens and paper, shouldn't homework be better conducted?

Apart from set reading and some memorising, I can't recall doing much homework before I weot to grammar school at age 11. There, homework was regularly set and monitored, the 1 1/2 bours a night growing to 2 1/2 or 3 by age 16. I suppose I was lucky to have my own bedroom to work in after tea, maybe between the 6 o'clock and 9 o'clock news on radio. My table and cbair were under the window in summer and the single gas lamp in winter, my old orange box loaded with books below, pens and papers above. I owned so few books, I remember most of them: The Bible and Book of Common Prayer (first communion), The Three Musketeers (my mother's present for passing to grammar school) and Twenty Years After (for being top of the class in year one), the Knights of the Round Table with its cover missing (given hy the school librarian for helping him) and Children's Encyclopaedia (school prize year one), a picture book Trains of the World matched by Wonders of the World, plus textbooks on loan — battered to a T, for these were issued in alphabetical order and by the time the teachers reached my name, only battered books were left but that was better than Johnny Wood or Alan Wright's predicament.

How different this sounds from today's West Amman teenagers whose telephones, faxes and e-mails, videos and CDs, magazines, outings and parties prove so distracting. Though these are in fact potential learning resources: The plethora of textbooks, commentaries and exam cribs, ENCARTA and other computer information systems, the video to see Shakespeare and the CD to hear Mozart, the magazines and TV bringing up-to-date information, the museums and libraries, trips and activities sbould enhance learning.

But to do so needs careful planning. Scbools should lead with clear bomework policies, enforced and encouraged. Homework should be clearly scheduled, (see table).

SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED
Eng	Arabic	Eng	Arabic	Music
Maths	Science	Maths	Science	Art
Geog	Hist	Civics	Geog	Hist

Homework diary

Students should record the schedule, sign that they've completed the bomework (and the time spent doing it) and parents should sign weekly that they've seeo it.

Teachers should set a range of differeni activities — reading, writing, research, drawing, listening, thinking — linked to the work in the classroom. Finish off this, read up on that, copy the other simply will not do. Whilst I did enjoy solving endless pages of sums, especially when I got them all right and was awarded a coloured pencil, I admit to being a bit odd. As there's more to math than such exercises, more to languages than comprehensions, more to social studies than memorisation, so homework should be a ricb enough diet to feed hungry learners. I try to include, in a month's work, textbook exercises including mapwork, a story or other creative writing, exam questions to answer, a game or group activity, research from both primary and secondary sources, a poster or a presentation from eacb of my classes, providing variety for them as well as for me. Of course homework must be marked and returned, quickly and with encouragement.

Parents should provide a quiet place, a corner of a bedroom or a "library," where resources and notes are stored and materials readily available, well lit and isolated from the hurly-burly of the household. They should set regular times for bomework, before and/or after tea each day, and ensure their childreo are not distracted during homework times. Parents sbould take an on-going interest in work done, not just the marks later bui the actual learning process. Whilst it seems some children can study effectively before their television monitors or CD players, most concentrate better without such disturbance. Some may say it's good for children to become inured to our noisy world, hui I fear for a generation reared to ignore music and TV — they find it hard to "shut up and listen" in class (that is, concentrate) and to think about the music and TV they're bearing and watching. Peace in our time is an elusive dream.

Children should expect to study outside school bours. Learning to work independently, without the stimulus or support of teachers or peers, is vital to personal development and the future of the country. Students need the space in which to reinforce their learning, revise what's weakly understood and to catch up oo what's been missed, to develop one's own interests. More than anything, they need to read — texts, novels and poetry, current affairs — especially boys if they're oot to fall behind the girls as in Britain. Children need to plan their time, not to leave everything to the last possible minute, then panic, try to work when tired or produce slapdash products. Schools need to eocourage good study habits and parents to ensure they're carried out. Ban all phone calls and television from 6:30-8 p.m. if that's when the children are working; don't shout at the kids to do things if they're studying. Be firm but fair.

Finally, is it a reflection on society in West Amman wbere, among all the clothes and furniture shops, and those selling televisions, jewellery and cars, there's barely one decent bookshop? If you don't read, why should your children? If they don't have good resources, how can they learn well?

Special technical committee drawing up criteria to select privatisation consultant

By Issam Qadamani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The government will select an international financial consultant to lead the promotion campaign for the sale of 33 per cent of the government's share in the Jordan Cement Factories Company.

The consultant will be asked to contact investors and to invite bids to select international experts in the field of promotion activities.

Adel Qudah, bead of the Privatisation Executive Unit at the Prime Ministry, said a special technical committee is currently drawing up the selection criteria according to which the consultant will be selected.

Mr. Qudah added that the government is currently involved in a large-scale privatisation process in accordance with a well-structured plan and timetable.

He pointed out that the government seeks to attract strategic partners with technical expertise who can contribute to improving the efficiency of companies undergoing privatisation and ensure quality services.

Ali Al Husari, chairman of the Exports and Finance Bank, a partner for Merrill Lyncb, wbicb bas been assigned to arrange for the sale of 40 per cent of the government's sbare in Jordan Telecommunication Company (JTC) said the turnout for purchasing the JTC shares is good but is still below the expectations.

Mr. Husari said the government will evaluate all offers and select the best. However, he noted, the government prefers a partner holding 40 per cent of the shares, but it would not object if two equally qualified partners buy these shares.

Official sources disclosed the government's plans to sell the remaining 60 per cent of its shares in the JTC. A mechanism is being worked out to ensure that the shares be sold to more than one party or one individual.

OECD says South East Asia crisis to cut Japan's growth substantially

PARIS (AFP) — The South East Asian crisis will cut this year's economic growth in industrial countries by some 0.2 per cent from earlier forecasts, with Japanese growth "substantially" lower, the OECD has said.

The crisis will trim 0.1 to 0.2 percentage points off European Union and U.S. economic growth rates this year and "twice that in Japan," Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) chief economist Ignazio Visco told a news conference.

Mr. Visco said that the latest figures prepared for the OECD's economic policy committee (EPC), which were several weeks old, showed growth in the industrial countries was likely to be 0.2 per cent lower than previously forecast both this year and next year.

In its half-yearly economic outlook report in June, the OECD forecast growth in the industrial countries at 3.0 per cent this year and 2.7 per cent in 1998.

In Japan, "compared with our previous economic forecasts, growth is going to be reduced substantially from our previous estimates" this year and next, Mr. Visco said at the end of a meeting of the EPC to prepare December's economic outlook report.

The OECD in June had forecast Japan's economic growth this year at 2.3 per cent in 1997 and 2.9 per cent for 1998.

White House chief economist Janet Yellen, who chaired the EPC meeting, said that the effect of the South East Asian crisis on growth in the world's industrialised countries would be "limited to some tenths of a per cent" but Pacific region members would be affected more than others.

She stressed, however, "the difficulty of making a definitive assessment given that the situation is still evolving."

Mr. Visco stressed that figures are still being revised ahead of next month's publication of the group's regular twice-yearly economic outlook report. The figures quoted did not take account of the latest plunge in the South Korean economy in the past two days.

EPC members felt that generally "the medium-term outlook for the South East Asian countries is favourable, under the condition they successfully implement the kinds of structural reforms that are needed," Ms. Yellen said.

Ms. Yellen said that Japan's growth prospects "remain sluggish," partly due to the South East Asian crisis but also due to domestic factors, and its growth prospects will be "disproportionately affected" by the South East Asian crisis.

Senior economic officials from OECD countries questioned whether Japan's "current export-led growth was tenable, in light of the existing current account surplus and potential trade tensions" it is causing, Ms. Yellen said.

Some EPC members also said the U.S. Federal Reserve "should be poised for a pre-emptive strike against a possible pickup in inflation in the near to medium term," although others said forces in the economy may already be working to slow growth to a sustainable rate.

They were also unable to unravel the "puzzle" of how the U.S. economy has maintained strong growth for so long without inflation, and finally decided that "only time will resolve" the question.

On the EU in the runup to the launch of the single currency in 1999, the EPC said that while the growth outlook is improving, "unemployment is projected to remain high, and therefore a source for concern," reiterating previous calls for structural reform of labour markets before the euro launch.

Asked whether the effect on EU growth from the South East Asian crisis would hamper member countries' ability to meet the Maastricht Treaty economic performance criteria to join the single currency, Mr. Visco said the effect would not be "substantial."

"This will bave some help with revenues from the budget side" to enable them to meet the criteria, he added.

Syrian economy minister praises private sector

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syria's Economy Minister Mohammed Al Imadi has praised the country's private sector for "contributing to building society" and said it accounts for half of Syria's gross national product.

In remarks published by the official daily Tishrin to mark an upcoming meeting of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) in Damascus, Dr. Imadi also said the private sector accounts for more than 62 per cent of Syria's foreign trade, and close to 50 per cent of its capital.

The Islamic Bank's board of governors is due to hold its 22nd annual meeting in the Syrian capital Wednesday.

Dr. Imadi also said he hoped the IDB would find ways to work with Syria's private sector.

IDB President Ahmad Mohammad Ali has said he hopes the Arab and Islamic ministers of finance, economy, and commerce attending the meeting will "become better informed of chances to invest in Syria."

Syria has sougbt since 1991 to liberalise its economy and bas taken measures to foster its private sector.

The IDB, with beadquarters in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, was created in 1973 to help finance development projects in Muslim countries.

Saudi Arabia looks to offset projects to boost economy

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Saudi Arabia is attracting billions of dollars in offset investment, supporting attempts by the kingdom to repair economic damage caused by weak oil prices, experts have said.

The world's dominant oil power, the first Gulf country to introduce offset programmes, has lured investors from its main arms suppliers the United States, France and Britain under major contracts signed in the past 10 years.

Experts at an offset conference in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) estimated the total capital in such projects in Saudi Arabia would reach $8 billion over the next few years.

Clyde Ellis of U.S. law firm Bryan Cage LLP told the conference that the Saudi government's much publicised budget difficulties and its call for the private sector to take a greater role meant offset projects could be expanded.

"It can be expected that offset commitments for future non-military projects will be required as well, as a means of attracting further foreign investment to the kingdom and providing more opportunities to the private sector to participate in such investments," said Mr. Ellis.

Saudi Arabia, its economy reeling under lower oil prices and huge cash payments for the Gulf war, has expanded its 10-year-old offset programme to include the non-military sector in a bid to woo in more capital.

The biggest civilian offset commitment was undertaken by the U.S. telephone and telegraphic company AT and T under a $4 billion contract signed in 1994 to upgrade the Gulf country's telephone network.

The Saudi government has not disclosed details of that offset commitment but Mr. Ellis said the deal involved an investment of $300 to $400 million.

"According to reports in the kingdom, the joint offset projects in Saudi Arabia will provide more than 9,000 jobs," said Abdul Aziz Al Sughair, president of the Saudi Advanced Electronics Company.

"There is no doubt such projects will greatly help the government in its efforts to ensure jobs for citizens and create more business opportunities for the private sector," said Mr. Sughair, who is heading the offset conference.

Under the offset programme introduced by the Saudis in the mid 1980s, arms suppliers must reinvest part of the weapons' deal value in civilian projects. The level ranges between 25 and 35 per cent, depending on the contract's size.

Military offset ventures in Saudi Arabia include those undertaken by Britain under the multi-billion-dollar Al Yamamah deal, which was signed in 1987 for the supply of Tornado aircraft and other military hardware.

The other commitments include those by the U.S. companies Boeing, Hughes, General Dynamics and McDonnell Douglas.

France has also undertaken an offset programme related to its sale of three Lafayette-class frigates to Saudi Arabia. It initially involved the setting up of a gold refinery, a potato processing plant and other ventures.

Most other Gulf oil producers have introduced offset programmes to attract foreign technology needed to ease reliance on unpredictable crude export earnings. But such programmes have not yet included the civilian sector.

IMF says Israel not ready for rate cut

TEL AVIV (R) — Stanley Fischer, an International Monetary Fund (IMF) vice-president, said Sunday that Israeli interest rates should not be lowered for the time being.

"When the inflation rate comes down the Bank of Israel can ease policies, at least ease nominal interest rates, but this is not the time to do that," Mr. Fischer said at a conference sponsored by the Bank of Israel and the World Bank.

He said he expected Israeli inflation to fall a notch next year to about seven per cent if the government holds to current fiscal and monetary policies. The consumer price index is expected to rise about 8.0 to 8.7 per cent this year.

"The seven per cent range is possible if they stay the course and they're on track for that in 1998," Mr. Fischer said.

Most analysts are forecasting lower inflation next year but expect the bank to keep the base rate at 13.4 per cent after inflation accelerated in October.

"This time significant progress on inflation is very close and it would be a big mistake to lose it by easing prematurely," Mr. Fischer said.

Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel, noting that the government's inflation target for this year and next was seven to 10 per cent annually, said he was shooting for the lower end of the band in 1998.

"You must remember the government also wants to see improvement within the target and that there are other decisions including a 2001 inflation rate in line with that of OECD countries and beyond that price stability as in industrialised countries," Dr. Frenkel said.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 1997

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) It looks like everybody's anxious to see what you're going to do next. They respect your opinion. If you're not sure how to proceed, consult a wise friend. This could be a professor. Don't let your sweetheart spend too much of your mutually held finances tonight.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Again, there's a flurry of activity. You're getting a glimmer of what the future has in store. You're thinking of wonderful new things to buy. You might even be saving up for a house. If you haven't already talked about that, schedule the conversation for this evening.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You're in a wacky mood this morning. Words come easily, but it's difficult to make decisions or get down to business. This evening, you'll have to do both. If you didn't clean house today, that's top priority. If you can get your friends to come over and help, so much the better.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) The morning will be the most difficult. Avoid accidents caused by impetuous behaviour, possibly someone else's. Be alert to keep from getting into trouble. Tonight will be excellent for romance, especially in a private setting.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You're in the mood to party, and everybody wants to come to your place. There's still work to be done, but that's OK. You're doing work you love, and it shows. Your energy and enthusiasm are high. While you've got it, you might as well flaunt it.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You're calming down and assimilating information more easily. You're always good at remembering things, but today you're awesome. There is some confusion, however. Something around your house is changing. Just keep doing the best you can and don't worry about it.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Make plans early. If they include shopping, do that later in the day. You have a tendency to spend money on beautiful things. Put that off until tomorrow. Grocery sbopping, however, is an excellent idea. You'll get more for less.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Somebody is asking embarrassing questions. Bureaucrats you're dealing with are giving you the run-around. Why should you bave to put up with this? You want to get on with your project. Well, that will happen soon. Meanwhile, get the homework done and turned in on time.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) The morning is best for new endeavours. Don't bother around the middle of the day. By afternoon, you'll be too busy with old business. A project you thought was finished might not be. Don't you just hate that? Take care of it right now.

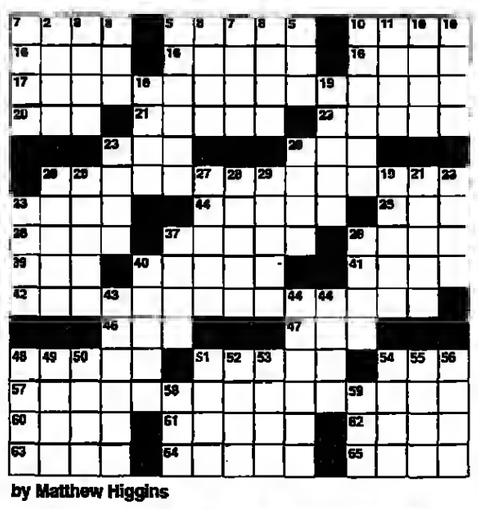
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) There is a push to do something far away. Do you need to travel to get something that will help you advance in your career? Maybe you can do it through a pbone call. This afternoon, conditions get easier. Relax with friends and talk about old times.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Start activities involving foreigners, travel or higher education this morning. You're in a creative mood, and a creative solution is required. Not to worry. You'll figure it out before tomorrow night. Talk your problem over with a friend.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You might have to shop for a few items, but don't spend much. Your partner can help, especially if be or sbe is a practicable type. Don't flaunt money to make a good impression. Other people don't care. Late tonight is good for travel.

Birthstone of November: Topaz — Tiger's Eye

THE Daily Crossword



ACROSS
1 Swift current
5 Put off
10 Rudely brief
14 Close associate
15 Jong, the author
16 Region
17 American financier
20 Viper
21 Expels
22 Yorkshire city
23 Consume
24 Burns' negative
25 U.S. industrialist
33 Become merged
34 Desert green spots
35 Aromatic plant
36 Curve segments
37 Insensitive
38 Mend socks
39 Miss Piggy's word
40 French river
41 Step —!
42 Scottish-born manufacturer
46 USNA grad.
47 Alliance letters
48 Did some cobbling
51 Packer great
54 Afternoon reception
57 17A, 25A, 42A
60 Seine feeder
61 Thrashes
62 Hindu princess
63 Repulsive one
64 Liquor flavor
65 — Islands, Ireland

DOWN
1 Husband of 62A
2 Mont Blanc's range
3 Desk item
4 Hurricane center
5 Agent
6 God of love
7 Fluff
8 Performs
9 Sweet potato
10 Lifework
11 Prod
12 Peruse
13 Becomes brown
18 Laugh loudly
19 Norwegian kings
23 Linemen
24 Moscow negative
25 Wading bird
26 Medieval Spanish knight
27 Infant's problem
28 — Ingalls Wilder
29 Grant portrayer
30 Teheran native
31 Marie or Pierre
32 Artist Rockwell
33 "I Remember —"
37 Bends in respect
38 Pursues persistently
40 — hand (help)
43 Staggered
44 "— without a thorn" (English proverb)
45 Holliday's pal
48 Catch sight of
49 Mississippi feeder
50 Mona —
51 British gun
52 Native of Bangkok
53 Linkletter and Carney
54 Despot
55 Sicilian spouter
56 "It's — to tell a lie"
58 Hoopster's org.
59 Gershwin or Levin

by Matthew Higgins

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Peanuts

Andy Capp

Mutt'n'Jeff

THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen

"My goal was to be a millionaire by age 30, but I just couldn't find enough deposit bottles."

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

PUBYM

LISEA

INMAYL

SNELET

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here : A

(Answers Monday)

Yesterday's Jumbles: CLOVE ABASH CUPFUL GYPSUM
Answer: Found at the shore – GULLS AND BUOYS

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Industrialists say recent reductions in customs as insufficient, inappropriate

** THE INDUSTRIALISTS have expressed their dissatisfaction over the recent reduction in customs on some production inputs saying that such reductions were not as they wished and expected. In order to better determine the situation, Amman Chamber of Industry (ACI) President Khaldoun Abu Hassan called on all industrialists to discuss the reductions and present studies on materials that are considered basic inputs for production and that are still being subjected to high customs duty. He also asked the industrialists to specify the products that need to be exempted.

Mr. Abu Hassan blasted the claims that the sales tax was a "neutral tax" and the pledge that local products will continue to be protected by between 30 per cent and 50 per cent customs duties. "Of course neither the neutrality nor the protection were honoured," he said. The ACI chief pointed out that the revenue from the consumption / sales tax has increased from JD174 million in 1993 to JD328 million in 1996 noting that the tax equates between local and imported products.

"In some cases, the tax favours imported products which get exempted whereas similar local products are subjected to the sales tax by imposing it on production inputs." Mr. Abu Hassan said. "Also, import products are subjected to the sales tax based on the import cost while for local products the tax is based on the sale price."

The ACI president gave further proof of less protection given to local industries by noting that while revenues from the sales tax were rising, revenues from customs duties were declining. He indicated that the treasury received a total of JD232 million from customs duties in 1996 compared to JD286 million in 1992 despite a 37 per cent increase in imports during the five-year period. (Al Ra'i).

Disagreements remain between the Jordanian and Israeli cement companies

** ACCORDING TO an Israeli newspaper, an attempt to settle disagreements between the Jordanian and Israeli cement factories has failed. The Jordanian side has requested that the volume of cement sales to the Palestinian territories be raised but the representatives of the Israeli company have objected to any increase.

For their part, the Israeli company proposed it be allowed to become a partner with the Jordanian firm but the representatives of the Jordanian side explained that such a step cannot be considered especially because the Jordanian company relies on cement sales to neighbouring markets such as Syria and Iraq (Al Arab Al Yawm).

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates — Prices as at 25/11/97 19:07

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.7436	0.5957	1.4092	127.58	1.4172	1708.40	1.9649	5.8362
DE Mark	0.5735	-	0.3416	0.8081	73.11	0.8133	979.36	1.1271	3.3467
GB Sterling	1.6787	2.9283	-	2.3661	214.19	2.3791	2867.04	3.2980	9.7943
CH Franc	0.7096	123.72	0.4223	-	90.47	1.0048	1211.63	139.41	4.1402
JP Yen	0.0078	1.3657	0.4662	1.1034	-	1.1100	13.38	153.84	4.5701
CA Dollar	0.7056	1.2327	0.4178	1.0011	1.11	-	1207.48	1.3885	4.1267
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0204	0.3483	0.0825	1340.66	0.8292	-	11.49	3.4145
NL Guilder	0.5089	88.67	0.3030	71.75	84.92	0.7212	869.77	-	2.9700
FR Franc	0.1713	0.2988	0.1020	24.1281	21.84	0.2428	33.65	33.6500	-

Middle Eastern Currencies

Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BHD	QAR	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7085	3.7506	0.3770	3.6400	0.3034	3.6727	1524.50	3.3950
Jordan Dinar	1.4114	-	5.2937	0.5321	5.1376	0.4283	5.1838	2151.73	4.7918
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1889	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0809	0.98	406.47	0.9052
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8794	9.9488	-	9.66	0.8049	9.74	4043.87	9.0055
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1946	1.0304	1.0304	-	0.0834	1.01	418.82	0.9327
Kuwait Dinar	3.2955	2.3349	12.3603	1.2424	12.00	-	12.10	5024.06	0.9327
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1929	1.0212	0.1026	0.9911	0.0826	-	415.09	0.9244
Lebanese/1000	0.66	0.4647	2.4602	0.2473	2.3877	0.1990	2.4091	-	2.2270
Egyptian	0.2946	0.2087	1.1047	0.1110	1.0722	0.0894	1.0818	449.04	-

Energy

Oil	Last	Previous
Brent	19.40	19.32
W. Texas	19.40	19.38
Bonny	19.40	19.32
Dubai	18.15	18.00
UL Gas	188.00	185.00

Mid-East Currencies

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4653	0.15883	0.37594	34.0426
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.47513	0.1622	0.38391	34.7645
KW Dinar	3.2955	5.75043	1.96309	4.64684	420.698
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.62963	1.58003	3.73972	338.639
CY Pound	1.953	3.4015	1.1624	2.7519	249.1

*** JOD Cross Rates**

Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	1.1945	1.2005
DE Mark	0.4067	0.4087
CH Franc	0.5032	0.5057
FR Franc	0.1215	0.1221
JP Yen	0.5541	0.5569
NL Guilder	0.3609	0.3627
IT Lira	0.4148	0.4169

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)

Period / Ccy	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	9 Months	1 Year
USD	5.56	5.75	5.76	5.81	5.87
GBP	7.33	7.58	7.69	7.58	7.62
JPY	0.29	0.03	0.75	0.19	0.19
DEM	3.85	3.68	3.81	3.85	4.00
FRF	3.80	3.54	4.41	3.83	3.93
CHF	1.62	1.94	2.00	2.08	2.16
ITL	6.15	6.09	5.80	5.54	5.36

Jordan seeks financing for transport projects

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan's agenda in the recent Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic conference in Doha included securing private sector financing for a number of transport sector projects, several of which had been in the planning stage for a number of years.

These projects include a former MENA proposal of expanding the Aqaba Railway System, and two new projects, construction of an industrial jetty at the Port of Aqaba and a light rail system servicing the Amman Municipality and outlying regions.

In addition to seeking substantial private sector investment in the Aqaba Railway Corporation, which would translate into a 20-25 year concession to a private operator to run and invest in the operations, objectives include two new rail links connecting the port to the phosphate mines and upgrading the line's infrastructure and stock to accommodate increasing requirements of the phosphate industry.

The total cost of the project, estimated at $94 million, includes one line linking the Eshidiya mines with an existing railway to facilitate the transport of goods into Aqaba city, and another line from the city to the industrial port at Wadi II.

The cost of the project has increased since its proposal at the 1995 MENA conference. The most notable increase in cost is the Wadi II extension, which was estimated at $13 million in 1995 but now stands at $32 million.

Ministry of Transport Secretary General Isa Ayyoub explained the increase in terms of the Aqaba area's priorities and projects. The coastal route, which is shorter and would have required less pre-construction preparation, would have "spoiled the touristic areas," he said.

After its completion, the railway is expected to accommodate the projected increase in the volume of phosphate moving through Aqaba, as well as to open up opportunities for the transport of other goods, according to the ministries conference statements.

Tenders for the project are expected to be issued in February 1998 and the concession is scheduled to be awarded in June 1998.

The projected $56 million industrial jetty project is designed to increase the current throughput of 4.6 million tonnes per year to 10 million by 2010. Materials entering the port include sulphur and ammonia, while exports are mostly phosphate-based products, such as di-ammonium phosphate, fertilisers, and phosphoric acid.

Private sector investment in this project, amounting to $22 million, will include the supply of the specialised loading and unloading equipment (conveyer systems and cranes and arms for sulphur and liquid ammonia), followed by a contract for the operation and maintenance of the equipment.

A $34 million European Investment Bank loan for the infrastructure (berths with a capacity for ships of up to 50,000 tonnes) has already been secured.

Finally, the estimated $170 million Amman area light rail system, designed to expediate the movement of passengers and commuters into and out of the downtown business area, drew interest from a number of European firms even before the MENA conference, according to Mr. Ayyoub.

The railway plans include provisions for over 42 kilometres of railway and an electric-powered system that would service the downtown-Zarqa and downtown-University of Jordan corridors, among others, he said.

For the Zarqa route, the existing Hijazi railway line would be utilised, while in the metropolitan area the line would be placed either in the middle of existing roads or to one side, he explained.

The current public transportation would not be seriously affected, according to Mr. Ayyoub, for two reasons. First, the light rail system will target the 30 per cent of passengers that the current system cannot accommodate, and second, the buses and service taxis will act as "feeders" for the new train terminals.

Proposals from potential developers and operators will be accepted in mid-1998 and the two-three year construction will begin in late 1998.

The private sectors' role in this project will be to finance a portion of the infrastructure, the railcars, and the operation and maintenance costs. Possibilities for the commercial development of terminals is also envisioned.

Former AIB employees seek premier's help for bank jobs

By Abdul Salam Gharaibeh *Special to the Jordan Times*

AMMAN — Former employees of the Amman Investment Bank (AIB) which last month was liquidated and sold to the Arab Bank have sent an appeal to Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali requesting the Central Bank of Jordan's intervention to ensure their reemployment.

In the letter, the group said that out of 73 former AIB employees, only 40 per cent of them were given jobs at the Arab Bank.

The Central Bank authorised the Arab Bank Ltd. to buy the liabilities and assets of the troubled AIB after the Central Bank board of directors approved the sale deal and authorised the Central Bank governor to sign it in his capacity as the legal liquidator of the AIB.

The group of employees said in their letter to the prime minister that Ahmad Abdul Fattah, the deputy governor of the Central Bank, has promised that all AIB employees will be absorbed by the Arab Bank but that they were surprised to see that less than half of their number got jobs.

In the letter, the group said that the head of the Central Bank liquidation committee had promised to find jobs in other banks should the Arab Bank fail to give jobs to the whole group or ensure that adequate compensation will be paid to them at the rate of one month pay for every year in service.

The AIB was liquidated due to the losses it has accumulated over the past years. The shortfall was reported to have amounted to nearly JD22.9 million.

It was the Amman Court of First Instance that ordered the liquidation of AIB earlier this year in view of these huge losses and requested the Central Bank to take charge of the liquidation process.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET
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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 25/11/1997

	PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	LAST PRICE	CHANGE
	356.000	246.500	ARAB BANK	15.2	1.21	2	150	52800	331.00	330.00	1.00-
N	2.340	1.680	JOR.NATIONAL BK.	E	0.00	3	1450	2697	1.87	1.86	.01-
	1.190	.890	MID.EAST INV.BK.	68.3	0.00	8	5000	5200	1.05	1.04	.01-
	2.680	2.150	INDUSTRIAL DEV.BK.	10.3	6.08	1	150	390	2.57	2.60	.03+
+S	4.180	1.900	JOR.KUWAIT BANK	9.9	0.00	5	242	457	1.90	1.85	.05-
	1.060	.740	JOR.GULF BANK	4.6	9.09	2	2000	1540	.77	.77	-
N	4.050	2.900	JOR.ISLAMIC BANK	15.1	3.24	14	4329	12810	2.95	2.96	.01+
	1.530	1.110	UNION BK.SAV.INV.	P	0.00	1	500	585	1.17	1.17	-
	1.900	.870	REIT.AL-MAL (BEITNA)	.6	16.67	1	500	450	.91	.90	.01-
	5.150	3.370	ARAB BANKING CO.	16.4	0.00	1	100	340	3.37	3.40	.03+
	BANK SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 237.17	%CHG: -0.27		40	14431	77268			
	2.050	1.550	JOR.ELECTRIC PWR.	9.1	5.32	25	32250	61044	1.89	1.88	.01-
	1.550	.930	NATL. PORTFOLIO	g	0.00	10	4250	4845	1.15	1.14	.01-
	6.830	3.900	AD-DOUSTOUR	25.1	4.15	2	1200	7224	5.73	6.02	.29+
	3.900	2.890	ARAB INTL.INV.EDUC.	9.8	0.00	14	5888	21909	3.71	3.75	.04+
	1.050	.770	JORDAN EXPAT.INV.	g	0.00	10	24850	18551	.77	.77	-
	1.100	.900	ZARKA EDUCATION	g	0.00	1	500	485	.96	.97	.01-
	2.230	1.630	UNIFIED CO.	6.1	6.43	7	1550	2658	1.72	1.71	.01-
	SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 108.98	%CHG: +0.07		69	70488	116715			
	11.150	9.190	JOR. PETROL.REFINARY	10.5	6.31	6	2593	27745	10.71	10.70	.01-
	4.700	3.040	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	11.6	4.76	6	2100	8820	4.20	4.20	-
	2.940	2.150	JORDAN DAIRY	9.4	8.73	2	119	333	2.94	2.80	.14-
	1.670	1.020	JOR.PIPES MANFCT.	16.7	5.93	2	1250	1688	1.35	1.35	-
	8.500	5.000	ARAB CHEM. DYESTUF.	20.0	4.60	1	260	1630	6.52	6.52	-
	3.850	2.220	ARAB ALUM.IND.	5.6	10.42	4	3500	8400	2.40	2.40	-
	.690	.450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	10.2	0.00	1	1000	480	.48	.48	-
	1.330	.700	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	g	0.00	15	128250	89791	.70	.73	.03+
	.770	.510	NATIONAL INDS.	g	0.00	5	1500	825	.55	.55	-
	1.200	.470	INTERMED.PETRO.CHEM.	g	0.00	16	7700	3624	.48	.47	.01-
	.920	.530	JOR. ROCKWOOL INDS.	g	0.00	2	1250	725	.59	.58	.01-
	2.970	1.500	UNIV.CHEM.INDS.	12.6	7.14	1	250	350	1.42	1.40	.02-
+	3.000	1.860	NATL.CABLE WIRE.MFAC	29.7	0.00	6	1314	2433	1.86	1.85	.01-
	.890	.530	JOR. SULPHO-CHEM	g	0.00	5	1950	1211	.63	.62	.01-
N	1.880	.950	UNIV. MODN.INDS.	P	.23	27	138050	132245	.95	.95	-
	1.410	.790	JOR.INDS.RESOURCES	10.6	12.66	1	250	198	.79	.79	-
	1.620	1.300	NATL. CHLORINE	14.2	4.44	5	792	1194	1.51	1.51	-
	1.070	.810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	16.5	0.00	22	19150	17235	.90	.90	-
	1.330	1.080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.7	0.00	2	3250	3998	1.23	1.23	-
	1.200	.860	UNION CH. & VEG.	59.5	0.00	1	50	55	1.07	1.09	.02+
	.810	.710	JORDAN STEEL	34.4	6.58	5	7100	5396	.76	.76	-
	.840	.570	MID.EAST COMPLEX	7.8	15.87	61	104450	66484	.63	.63	-
	INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 116.81	%CHG: 0.00		199	426143	375919			
	GRAND TOTAL		INDEX: 171.23	%CHG: -0.16		308	511062	568903			

PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUSEDAY 25/11/1997

	.610	.370	JOR.TRADE FAC.	10.1	0.00	7	2500	950	.38	.38	-
	.800	.660	UNION INV. 50%	g	0.00	12	77700	18646	.74	.74	-
	.570	.360	ARAB FIN.INVEST.	g	0.00	3	1450	595	.41	.41	-
TN	1.220	1.050	CENTURY INV. GROUP	E	0.00	1	250	320	1.22	1.26	.06+
N	1.000	1.000	ARAB JOR.INVEST.CO.	E	0.00	3	24000	24000	1.00	1.00	-
	.690	.440	ARAB FOOD & MED.	g	0.00	8	4500	2528	.56	.57	.01+
	.750	.380	NATL.HOLY.ENG.NAMICO	g	0.00	44	133550	54925	.40	.42	.02+
	.640	.370	NAYSAK OIES & MOULDS	g	0.00	2	450	176	.38	.39	.01+
	.660	.580	MIDEAST PHARM. 75%	E	0.00	1	50	19	.62	.62	-
	1.400	.860	UNION TOBACCO 75%	g	0.00	2	365	422	1.36	1.35	.01-
	.730	.550	NAHI PHARM.	N	0.00	6	6250	4056	.65	.65	-
	.470	.290	INDS. ENG.	g	0.00	2	3100	930	.30	.30	-
	.860	.600	INDS. CERAMIC	18.0	0.00	2	700	422	.60	.61	.01+
N	1.000	.560	NAT.ALUMINIUM. 75%	94.5	0.00	6	3500	1500	.67	.68	.01+
+N	1.000	.950	MODERN FOOD IND. 75%	N	0.00	1	250	163	.95	.90	.05-
	20.390	18.500	JOR.TOBACCO & CIG.	g	0.00	2	26	520	20.00	20.00	-
	GRAND TOTAL					104	258661	110170			

T : New 12 months high
+ : New 12 months low
N : Stock dividend during the past 12 months
N : Listed during the past 12 months
P : P/E ratio is 100 or more
g : Negative P/E
E : Earning is zero or N/A for the most recent year

Safi Salt signs $3m deal with Turkey

AMMAN (Petra) — A $3 million agreement was signed Monday between the Safi Salt Company and Dunya Company of Turkey.

According to the agreement, the Turkish company will import industrial salt worth $3 million.

The Safi Salt Company has exported almost 10,000 tonnes of industrial salt to Turkey and its has already received some purchasing applications from foreign companies.

The agreement was signed on the Jordanian side by its Board Chairman Talal Ureikat and on the part of the Turkish company by its General Manager Najdat Karam.

The Safi industrial salt is 99.5 per cent pure.

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Olajuwon to have knee surgery, out until February

HOUSTON (AFP) — Houston Rockets center Hakeem Olajuwon will be sidelined until the All-Star break in February following arthroscopic surgery Monday to remove damaged tissue from his left knee.

Olajuwon underwent an MRI that revealed a folding of tissue in the joint capsule known as a medial plica. He was to have surgery at Methodist Hospital in Houston performed by team physician Walter Lowe.

A team spokesman said the injury was a result of normal wear and tear. The Rockets expect Olajuwon to return by the All-Star break, which begins February 5.

Olajuwon played 39 minutes in Saturday's 90-84 victory over the Golden State Warriors, recording nine points and 13 rebounds. On Sunday, team doctors examined him and said he possibly faced surgery.

The Rockets were already without All-Star forward Charles Barkley, who is out until at least Friday with a groin injury.

After some early-season bickering, Houston has won its last three games to climb to 6-5.

The 34-year-old Olajuwon has not missed a game this season and is averaging 14.8 points, 9.2 rebounds and 2.8 blocks. He is a 12-time All-Star who led the Rockets to consecutive NBA titles in 1994 and 1995.

The top overall pick in the 1984 draft, Olajuwon was the 1994 Most Valuable Player and the Defensive Player of the Year in 1993 and 1994. He won the MVP of the NBA Finals in 1994 and 1995.

Pippen wants to leave Bulls

CHICAGO (AFP) — Ailing Scottie Pippen wants to be traded from the Chicago Bulls, who have struggled to show their championship form without him in their line-up.

Pippen told the Daily Herald newspaper of Arlington Heights, Illinois, just outside Chicago, that once he recovers from surgery to repair a soft tissue injury in his foot he expects to be playing for another National Basketball Association team.

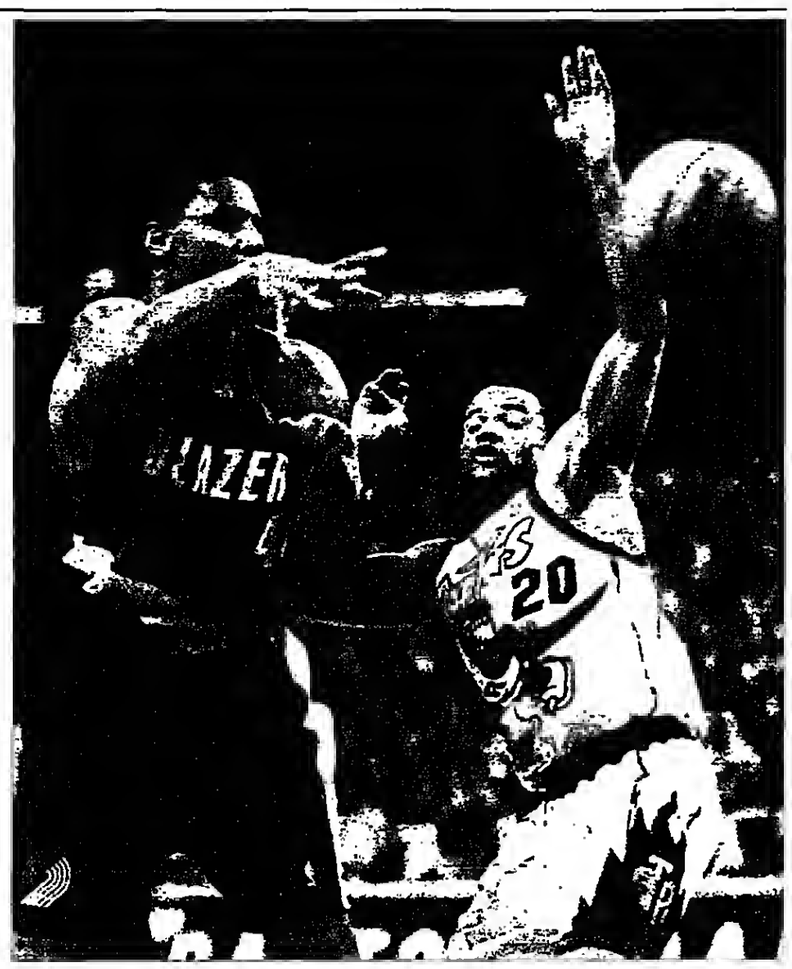
"I want to be traded," Pippen said from Sacramento, where the Bulls beat the Kings 103-88 on Sunday.

The victory was their second straight road win, after four defeats away from home this season. It was only their third 100 point game of the season.

Supporters have suggested that the Bulls's slow start to the season posed no danger, since they would have Pippen back in time for a title charge in December or January. "I ain't coming back," Pippen told the Daily Herald. "Krause is chicken (to trade me), but I want to be traded."

Bulls general manager Jerry Krause and Pippen have been on uneasy terms since Krause tried to trade him to Seattle two years ago.

He also spoke to the Boston Celtics about a Pippen trade this summer. Michael Jordan scored 18 of his 33 points in the second quarter and Toni Kukoc matched his season high with 18 points to along with eight assists and six rebounds.



Portland Trail Blazers' Brian Grant (L) battles with Toronto Raptors' Damon Stoudamire during the first half of their NBA game in Toronto. This is the Raptors' second game since the resignation of General Manager Isiah Thomas (Reuters photo)

Novotna rises to No. 2 in latest WTA rankings

MIAMI (AFP) — Czech veteran Jana Novotna regained the World No. 2 spot in the WTA Tour rankings released here on Monday, a day after her triumph in the WTA Championships.

Martina Hingis, ousted in the quarter-finals of the season finale in Manhattan last week, retained the world number one ranking, while France's Mary Pierce, who upset Hingis en route to the final, remained at number seven.

American Lindsay Davenport fell from her career-high second back to third.

Women's WTA world tennis rankings issued on Monday:

1. Martina Hingis (Swi)	6264 pts
2. Jana Novotna (Cze)	3753
3. Lindsay Davenport (USA)	3696
4. Amanda Coetzer (Rsa)	3360
5. Monica Seles (USA)	2988
6. Iva Majoli (Cro)	2874
7. Mary Pierce (Fra)	2861
8. Irina Spirlea (Rom)	2577
9. Arantxa Sanchez (Spa)	2361
10. Mary Joe Fernandez (USA)	2114
11. Nathalie Tauziat (Fra)	2003
12. Conchita Martinez (Spa)	1988
13. Sandrine Testud (Fra)	1841
14. Anke Huber (Ger)	1829
15. Brenda S.-McCarthy (Ned)	1543
16. Sabine Appelmans (Bel)	1502
17. Lisa Raymond (USA)	1437
18. Dominique Van Roost (Bel)	1394
19. Ruxandra Dragomir (Rom)	1333
20. Ai Sugiyama (Jpn)	1252

Jana Novotna

Mary Pierce

NBA STANDINGS

By The Associated Press

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	Gb
New York	9	4	.692	-
Orlando	9	4	.692	-
Miami	8	4	.667	1-2
New Jersey	7	4	.636	1
Boston	7	6	.538	2
Philadelphia	3	7	.300	4 1-2
Washington	4	10	.286	5 1-2

Central Division

Atlanta	11	2	.846	-
Charlotte	8	3	.727	2
Chicago	8	5	.615	3
Milwaukee	7	5	.583	3 1-2
Cleveland	6	6	.500	4 1-2
Indiana	5	6	.455	5
Detroit	5	9	.357	6 1-2
Toronto	1	12	.077	10

Western Conference

Midwest Division

	W	L	Pct	Gb
San Antonio	7	5	.583	-
Houston	6	5	.545	1-2
Utah	7	6	.538	1-2
Minnesota	6	6	.500	1
Vancouver	6	8	.429	2
Dallas	3	9	.250	4
Denver 0	11	.000	6 1-2	

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	11	0	1.000	-
Phoenix	7	2	.778	3
Seattle	10	3	.769	2
Portland	9	4	.692	3
Sacramento	4	8	.333	7 1-2
Golden State	1	10	.091	10
L.A. Clippers	1	12	.077	11

Monday's Games

Portland	91	Toronto	90	
Orlando	95	Washington	87	
Utah	133	Minnesota	124	OT

World Cup qualifiers

Australia seek to restrain Iran's danger man

MELBOURNE (AFP) — Terry Venables is working on a plan to stop Iran's danger man Karim Bagheri dictating play in Saturday's crucial World Cup playoff against Australia here.

Bagheri returns to the Iranian team after completing a two-match suspension for being sent off in the 2-0 defeat by Qatar on November 7.

Bagheri, who plays for Arminia Bielefeld in the German Bundesliga, missed last Saturday's first leg 1-1 draw in in Tehran, but the Iranians are holding high hopes that he will swing the balance before an anticipated 90,000 crowd at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

"We will be tightening up and making sure that he is not the influence that he can be," Venables said after Tuesday's training here in sweltering conditions.

"He's a playmaker and he dictates the game and the pace of the game, his passing is excellent, short and long," he said.

"He's a very good player and anything up to 30 yards he hits like a rocket."

The former England manager who became coach to the Socceroos in January, admitted that several of his players had been lacking in fitness in Tehran.

But he believes that demanding game made his players more match-hardened.

He said his players would not stray from their game plan and would attack but could be forced onto the back foot as the Iranians chased goals.

"It may be that we are defending but we're not going to go out and do that," he said."

Australia needs either a victory or at worst a scoreless draw to ensure a place in next year's finals in France.

"It's like last Saturday, we did not decide to defend in the second half, they threw everything at us and we had to see it out," he said.

Soccer Australia reported that ticket sales were expected to reach 60,000 early Wednesday in the 95,000-capacity MCG.

Respected Hungarian referee Sandor Puhl will take charge of Saturday's match.

Puhl, who refereed the 1994 Brazil-Italy World Cup final, has been voted the No.1 referee for the past three years in an international poll.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

World Cup cages may be removed

PARIS (AFP) — French Sports Minister Marie-George Buffet said Tuesday that perimeter fences may well brought down for next year's World Cup. However, she said each of the 10 stadiums would be considered on a case-by-case basis. Nantes, for instance, have asked for the fences to remain. FIFA, football's world governing body, has asked the French World Cup organisers to bring down fences and the problem has been passed to the government.

Villa gifts upset Bucharest coach

BUCHAREST (AFP) — Aston Villa fans have angered UEFA Cup opponents Steaua Bucharest by bringing gifts of clothes and food for Bucharest orphans. Steaua coach Mihai Stoichita blasted the gesture. "Romania shouldn't be shown as if it was a country of street children. Other countries, including Britain, have this sort of problem," he said. One hundred and twenty English fans travelled to Bucharest for Tuesday's match which will be policed by 1,200 officers.

Yellow card for Italy's referees

MILAN (AFP) — Italy's referees have been given a warning by football federation chief Luciano Nizzola in the wake of the latest howler by a match official in the Serie A. Three weeks after a referee 'missed' an Oliver Bierhoff goal for Udinese against Juventus, officials were back in the dock after Bologna's Michele Paramatti 'scored' on Sunday with a header which never crossed the line. Nizzola has spoken to referees' chief Fabio Baldas, and asked for a report on the season so far. "I'm asking for the maximum possible attention and concentration from referees, along with their total commitment to training, so as to reduce the number of refereeing errors," Nizzola told him. "I know that people mistakes, and that those made by referees are the hardest to forgive, but that's no reason for them to take a back seat during the matches." Baldas acknowledged the recent blunders, saying: "It's true that mistakes have been made, but overall, the situation is more than satisfactory." However, he is nevertheless expected to rap a few knuckles during a top-level referees' conference in Trieste next week.

DDR sports doctors face drugs trial

BERLIN (AFP) — Berlin prosecutors have committed two doctors to trial for prescribing performance-enhancing drugs to swimmers in the old East Germany. Dieter Binus, 58, former Dynamo Berlin club doctor and women's national team chief from 1976-80, and Berndt Pansold, 55, in charge of sports medicine in Berlin, are accused of supplying 19 teenagers at the Dynamo Berlin club with hormonal substances. The prosecution claims all the swimmers were victims of abnormal muscular development and some of them suffered irreversible damage. Charges have already been brought against four coaches. The coaches — Dieter Lindemann, 46, who coached former Olympic champion Franziska Van Almsick until last year, Volker Frischke, 53, Rolf Glaeser, 57, and Dieter Krause, 50, are accused of causing actual bodily harm by giving teenagers anabolic steroids to take between 1974 and 1989. German justice considers doping in sport was systematic in the former DDR and other coaches, officials and doctors may face charges.

Aussies play Zimbabwe in Davis Cup

MELBOURNE (AFP) — Tennis Australia on Tuesday chose the regional city of Mildura in Victoria state to host the Davis Cup world group first round tie against Zimbabwe next April. The Australian association preferred the grass courts at the Mildura Club, on the banks of the Murray River, ahead of competing bids from Canberra and the Tasmanian city of Launceston to host the April 3-5 tie. It also announced that if Australia beat Zimbabwe, the Davis Cup quarter-final against either Italy or India will be staged in Brisbane from July 17-19. Australian coach Tony Roche and Davis Cup captain John Newcombe had the final say on the two grass court Cup venues. "Our resident turf consultant, Murray MacFarlane, has assured me the courts will be as good as any in the world," Newcombe said. "Many of our greats, including Margaret Court, Rod Laver, Tony Roche and Roy Emerson have come from country areas and it's only fitting we're bringing one of our strongest Davis Cup teams to Mildura," he said.

Referee reveals UAE bribery offer

SAN JOSE (AFP) — A Costa Rican FIFA referee revealed here on Monday that he was offered $50,000 to help the United Arab Emirates team beat Japan in the World Cup Asian Zone qualifier on October 25. The referee Rodrigo Badilla said that he had rejected the offer straight away. "I received an anonymous telephone call in my hotel offering to pay me $50,000 if I would help the United Arab Emirates," Badilla told AFP. "I replied that they were mad and that I would referee the match as I usually do ... by the rules. "I don't know if this was a bad joke or a real bribe. The one thing I am sure of is that the phone call took place," Badilla added. The match ended in a 1-1 draw but Japan went on to qualify for the finals after beating Iran in a one leg play-off while the United Arab Emirates failed to qualify.

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Chris O'Donell & Jene Hackman ... in
THE CHAMBER
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:634144
PHILADELPHIA "2"
Charles Grodin ... in
BEETHOVEN'S 2ND
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10,30

CINEMA TEL:699238
PLAZA
Nour Al Sharif & Layla Alwi... in
AL MASEER (Arabic)
Winner in the 1997 Cannes festival
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:677420
CONCORD
CONCORD "1"
Rowan Atkinson... in
MR. BEAN
Shows:12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30
CONCORD "2"
SLEEP WALKERS
Shows: 3:30, 6:00 only

CINEMA TEL: 079 33430
GALLERIA 1
ABDOUN
Nour Al Sharif & Layla Alwi... in
AL MASEER (Arabic)
Winner in the 1997 Cannes festival
Shows: 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:45

CINEMA TEL: 079 33430
GALLERIA 2
ABDOUN
NOTHING TO LOSE
Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

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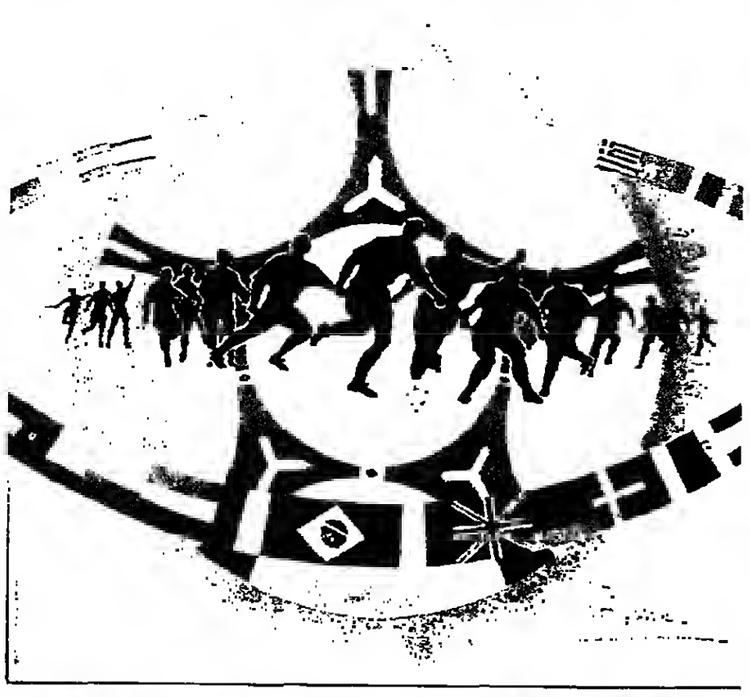

The offical poster for the city of Lens, one of ten host cities during the 1998 World Cup, was revealed by the organising Committee. The poster was designed by Georges Pokker a freelance artist. The 16th soccer World Cup takes place in France from June 10 until July 12 1998 (Reuters photo)

Southwest Asian Games

Jordan wins silver, bronze in athletics

By Aleen Bannayan in Amman and Jordan Sports Media reporters in Tehran

AWWAD SREYES Tuesday won the second silver medal for Jordan in the 5,000 metres while Tareq Najjar took bronze in the shot put as the athletics competition got under way at the Southwest Asian Games which conclude in Tehran, Iran, Friday.

Sreyes finished the race below his personal best clocking 14 minutes 43.94 seconds.

"The three Iranians executed a clever plan. I could not have beaten them," Sreyes told reporters after the Iranians took the gold and bronze.

"I'm happy to have won Jordan a second silver medal. I will hopefully add a gold medal in the 10,000 metres."

The organisers have decided to drop the marathon for which only a handful of athletes have turned up but accepted Jordan's request to hold the 10,000 metres Friday so that Sreyes will be able to take part after resting one day.

Najjar set a Jordanian record in the shot put with a throw of 15.80 metres.

He expressed hope that he would also do well in the discus on Thursday.

Earlier Mohammad Abu Khadijeh literally knocked out his Turkmen opponent in the heavyweight 91-kilogramme boxing bout lifting the morale of his teammates as well as Jordan's delegation which only had one medal before Tuesday's events added another two.

Jordan's five boxers were all medal winners at the Pan-Arab Games. However, Ayman Nadi and Kamal Abdul Majid lost on the opening day while Khaldoun Abdul Hamid and Basel Hindawi are assured of a medal after getting first round byes in the 57 and 81 kilogrammes.

The results of Tuesday's boxing bouts were unavailable by press time.

Meanwhile, the Iranian Boxing Federation Tuesday said it would invite Jordan's impressive boxing team to a competition in February. All expenses will be paid by the hosts.

In tennis, Jordan's Ahmad Al Hadeed ended his participation in the men's singles event losing 6-3, 6-3 to his Iranian opponent.

Al Hadeed had scored his sole win over Turkmenistan.

In team tennis, Jordan lost to Turkmenistan, Iran and Tajikistan and was easily knocked out of the event which required at least two players.

With the team missing the country's current top tennis players, Faris and Laith Azzouni, who were unable to join the team for personal reasons, Al Hadeed was the only player left prompting Mazen Hatamleh, the team manager, to register as player and take a heavy beating of 6-0, 6-0 in all matches.

The fencing competition got under way Tuesday with Jordan's Amer Natour, a medallist at the Pan-Arab Games, clearly needing the guidance of his coach who had to return to Amman because he couldn't extend his leave from the University of Jordan.

Natour scored his only win 5-3 over Kyrgizstan, but lost 5-2 to Kuwait, 5-4 to Turkmenistan, and 5-1 to Iran.

In the quarterfinals, Natour lost 15-13 to Kyrgizstan and was thus eliminated from the epee competition.

The judo competition starts Wednesday with Jordan's Mousa Khalaf and Rami Dasouqi competing.

Ayed Khawaldeh had secured the Kingdom's first silver medal when he won the 54-kilogramme event in the weightlifting competition.

Khawaldeh, the only weightlifter representing Jordan, had became the only Jordanian to win three medals at July's Pan-Arab Games.

Jordan was also eliminated from the wrestling and badminton and the teams have already returned home.

Weightlifting and athletics have made up for otherwise disappointing results at the Games currently under way in Tehran with 12 countries competing in 17 sports events.

Open to men's teams only, the Nov. 19-28 Games have brought together athletes from Saudi Arabia, Syria, Palestine, Oman, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Yemen, Jordan and Iran.

Jordan's 37-member delegation comprises 19 athletes competing in 8 events: Athletics, boxing, fencing, badminton, tennis, wrestling, weightlifting and judo.

The games also include basketball, karate, table tennis, soccer, handball, taekwondo shooting and swimming.

Unable to cover air-fare, many Jordanian federations opted to stay away like equestrian, handball, basketball, volleyball, shooting and table tennis federations.

However, in an effort to increase the Kingdom's competitive chances, the Jordan Olympic Committee (JOC) sponsored excelling players by paying for medal-winning athletes at July's Pan-Arab Games, while the rest of the participating federations covered their own expenses.

Jordan took a total of 40 medals, including 10 gold, 8 silver and 22 bronze medals to finish fifth among the 19 participating countries gaining more gold medals in Beirut than in the past seven Pan-Arab Games altogether, and capping the best Jordanian participation since the event was first held in 1953.

Twelve medal-winners are included in the delegation including Fakruldin Fuad and Tareq Najjar (athletics), Mousa Khalaf (judo), Mohammad Abu Khadijeh, Ayman Nadi, Kamal Abdul Hamid, Khaldoun Abdul Hamid and Basel Hindawi (boxing), Abdul Hakim Abu Sneineh and Ismail Sheikh (wrestling), Ayed Khawaldeh (weightlifting), and Amer Natour (fencing).

Only three of the eight federations participating in the Tehran Games were impressive in Beirut.

The boxing, athletics and weightlifting teams earned five medals each while the wrestlers took four. Judo and fencing earned a medal each.

On the other hand, some of the declining federations had impressive results at the Pan-Arab Games like the gold medal-winning soccer team and table tennis who took two bronze medals.

1st Division Handball Championship

Salt and Ahli battle for 1st place

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The third week of the second leg in Handball's First Division Championship kicks off Thursday with second placed Al Ahli meeting 5th placed Amman look to add another three-point to top the standings.

Al Salt are still in the lead with 21 points after beating Kufranjeh 36-24 followed by Al Ahli and Arabi with 18 points each.

A heated week is expected between leaders Al Salt and Al Ahli battling for the lead and also between Al Ahli and Arabi for the second place.

The second leg of the championship started with expected wins for Al Salt, Al Hussein and Al Arabi.

• **Al Arabi 32 Umm Jozeh 17:** Al Arabi played an easy match beating Umm Jozeh's defence who looked tired and weak in guarding the wings.

Al Arabi's confident and experienced players scored from the wings depending on Mouaffaq Fathallah and Mohammad Abu Lail to end the first half 15-7.

In the second half Al Arabi took advantage of Umm Jozeh's scattered defence and kept scoring to end the match 32-17.

• **Al Salt 35 Yarmouk Shouneh 17:** With a quick start Al Salt began their endless attacks against 7th place Yarmouk Shouneh and kept them helpless against Jihad Qtaishat and Mohammad Hindawi.

Meanwhile Yarmouk Shouneh tried to penetrate through their opponent's defence but without any success.

Al Salt ended the match a winner and the first half 17-6.

• **Al Ahli 36 Kufranjeh 24:** Al Ahli, with their eyes on the lead, played an easy match against lowly Kufranjeh who looked disorganised in their defence.

Taking advantage of the situation, Al Ahli's Mohammad and Samer Hamarsheh and the new comer Anas Awartani undertook the scoring as Al Ahli left the court a winner 36-24 (20-11).

Meanwhile the Jordan Handball Federation announced that Al Salt Club had agreed to take part in the 2nd Arab Champions Cup to be held in Amman Dec. 3-13.

Al Salt is the second Jordanian team to be part of the event beside Al Arabi in addition to nine other teams from neighbouring countries.

Teams participating in the event are: Egypt's Al Ahli, Tunisia's Al Olympi, Qatar's Al Rayan and Qatar, Al Shabab and Al Ahli of the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia's Al Ahli, Kuwait's Al Qadisieh and Lebanon's Al Sadaqah.

The JHF also set December 3 for the championship draw.

Standings after 2nd week

Team	W	D	L	Gf	Ga	Pts
Salt	9	1	-	331	243	21
Al Ahli	8	1	-	325	243	18
Arabi	8	-	2	359	279	18
Hussein	6	-	3	272	258	13
Amman	3	1	5	273	267	7
Umm Jozeh	3	1	6	248	317	7
Y. Shouneh	2	-	7	253	271	4
Kufrsoum	-	1	7	217	275	1
Kufranjeh	-	1	9	276	349	1

Schedule of third week

Al Ahli vs. Amman	Nov. 27	Sports Palace
Umm Jozeh vs. Kufranjeh	Nov. 27	Al Hassan City
Salt vs. Hussein	Nov. 28	Al Hassan City
Al Arabi vs. Y. Shouneh	Nov. 28	Al Hassan City

Broncos rout Raiders 31-3

DENVER (AFP) — Terrell Davis scored a career-high three rushing touchdowns and John Elway threw for 280 yards as the Denver Broncos' defence dominated Jeff George and the Oakland Raiders 31-3 Monday.

The Broncos avenged a 28-25 National Football League loss to Oakland on October 19 and gave coach Mike Shanahan his fifth win in six meetings with his former team. Denver has scored at least 30 points in its last six home games, one behind the San Diego Chargers' 36-year-old record.

The Broncos' defence held the Raiders to just 260 yards, including 109 in the second half. The three points represented the lowest output by the Oakland offence since September 8 1996 — a span 25 games.

Davis opened the scoring 6:35 into the second quarter with a three-yard touchdown run. On Denver's next possession, he capped a nine-play, 78-yard drive with a 19-yard score. Davis added his final touchdown, and 12th of the season, four minutes into the third quarter when he bulled his way in from the 2 for a 21-3 lead.

Elway completed 21-of-32 passes, including a 15-yard TD toss to Rod Smith that capped the scoring. Tight end Shannon Sharpe had 10 catches for 142 yards for the first-place Broncos, who are 10-2 and lead Kansas City by a game in the AFC West.

George was sacked four times and connected on just 22-of-41 passes for just 185 yards as the Raiders suffered their worst loss since the opening day of the 1994 season.

UEFA Champions League

Red Devils target more glory as Juve sweat it out

PARIS (AFP) — The Champions League goes into its final stages Wednesday and Thursday with some of Europe's top names ready to clinch their berths in the last eight of the competition — while others sweat on whether they will miss the boat.

Group B is a case in point, where English Premiership champions Manchester United are all but through even before they host the weakest team in their Group B, the Slovaks of Kosice.

United can now only not reach the quarter-finals if they fail to beat rock-bottom Kosice on Thursday and also lose at Juventus as they bid to lift the Champions Cup for the first time in 30 years.

And that could easily spell doom for Juve, last year's finalists and winners in 1996.

The scenario is complicated by the fact that this week's games are spread over two days to satisfy the voracious appetite of television, which finds itself without any Cup Winners' Cup fare on Thursday.

That could in theory help Juventus, who need a two-goal win at Feyenoord to go top of the group, if only overnight.

But Alex Ferguson's Red Devils, who have won all four of their games so far, will move three points ahead again with a win in the Old Trafford cauldron over the group's whipping boys.

Key midfielder David Beckham will be back in United's starting line-up after the England star was surprisingly left on the bench when United won 5-2 at Wimbledon on Saturday before coming on to score twice.

And Ferguson, irritated by persistent questioning of why the hugely talented youngster was left out, insisted: "Beckham will play against Kosice on Thursday."

Juventus go to Rotterdam knowing they could well be eliminated if they fail to oust United from top spot.

Only the two best second-placed teams qualify for the quarter-finals and Juve's defeat in Manchester means they are condemned to win the return on December 10.

Coach Marcello Lippi vowed following Sunday's 2-2 draw with Parma, which left his men in second place in the Serie A behind Internazioonale that "we are ready for the tasks which await us."

Juve will be without suspended midfielder Antonio Conte, whose place is set to go to Alessio Tacchinardi.

Holders Borussia Dortmund should be able to consolidate their two-point lead in Group A over Parma with three points against Galatasaray Istanbul.

Carlo Anceloni's Parma face Sparta Prague minus Argentine central defender Nestor Sensini who has hamstring trouble.

Dortmund cannot yet field Dutch striker Harry Decheiver, just signed from Utrecht, but they still have firepower aplenty in Stephane Chapuisat and Heiko Herrlich, who will cost the club an extra million dollars to be paid to former side Moenchengladbach after signing a new contract.

In Group C, leaders Dynamo Kiev can wrap up the group Thursday if they beat PSV Eindhoven, twice conquerors of Newcastle United, at home.

PSV will rely on brilliant Belgian striker Luc Nilis for goals and welcome back experienced defender Stan Valckx as they bid to keep things tight at the other end.

Newcastle, shorn of all their strikers for both games against the Dutch — they failed to score in both — hope to put themselves back in to contention by winning on Wednesday in the Nou Camp against a Barcelona side who have endured a dreadful, winless campaign to date.

The man who almost single-handedly handed Barca a 3-2 defeat at Saint James' Park in the first match, Colombian striker Faustino Asprilla, is unlikely to return from almost two months on the sidelines following stomach surgery. Worse still for United, on-form winger Keith Gillespie is suspended.

Manager Kenny Dalglish explained his reluctance to risk Asprilla by saying: "There is much more to our season than Wednesday night. He will return the moment we feel he is fully fit and no-one will rush us.

John Barnes, who has found a rich vein of goalscoring form recently, will deputise.

Barcelona, displaced by rivals Real Madrid as Spanish leaders at the weekend, have several injury worries, while defender Sergi is suspended.

The Catalan club have only 12 players fully fit and eligible, and Michael Reiziger or Pep Guardiola is likely to come in for Sergi.

Guardiola returned as a late sub from injury at the weekend — only to be dismissed in the 2-1 defeat at Oviedo.

Brazilian star Giovanni, Albert Ferrer and Portuguese playmaker Luis Figo all face late fitness tests.

Group F has become one of the closest, with Bayer Leverkusen and Monaco both locked on nine points at the head of the group.

The French champions still have to travel to Bayer, whom they thrashed 4-0 in the first match between the two.

But first they need to boost their claim for a place in the last eight by avenging a 3-0 away loss against Portugal's Sporting Lisbon. Leverkusen travel to Belgium's Lierse, bottom with just a single point to date.

Groups D and E meanwhile have clear favourites in the shape of Spain's Real Madrid, six times winners although not since 1966, and Germany's Bayern Munich, triple winners in the early 1970s.

Real have been running away with the group and stand three points clear of Norway's Rosenborg, whom they face in Norway on Thursday. A draw there should be enough for Jupp Heynckes' Madrilenos as they then have a home game against a weak Porto vintage.

Real's Brazilian defender Roberto Carlos made the trip but is doubtful with a left knee injury. The Spaniards may opt to leave Croatian star striker Davor Suker on the bench at the start. Bundesliga champions Bayern, travel to Besiktas with a three-point cushion over the Turks and Paris Saint Germain, who play Gothenburg away in Wednesday's other group clash.

The Bavarians, whose halo slipped in the defeat at PSG in their last outing, finish up with a home match against Gothenburg, whom they beat easily 3-1 in Sweden.

Regardless of the outcome of that final game, the Germans can secure their passage with a draw in Turkey. But they will have to do the job without midfielder "Super" Mariu Basler, who has a knee injury picked up in the 3-0 win Saturday over Duisburg.

But striker Carsten Jancker is fit again after ankle trouble.

PSG have their forward Florian Maurice similarly back as they try manfully at least to stay in the race for the best runners-up spot with a win in Gothenburg. The French beat the Swedes 3-0 in their first clash.

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Qatar invites AI to observe trial of 110 coup bid suspects

DOHA (AFP) — Qatar has agreed to allow Amnesty International to send an observer to the trial of more than 110 suspects, including a royal family member, in a failed coup attempt, the official oews agency QNA said Tuesday.

The foreign minister, Sheikh Hamad Beo Jassem Ben Jaber Thani, seot the approval in a letter to the Loodon-based Amnesty. The embassies of U.N. Security Couocil members have also been invited to send observers.

Ten foreigners are among those due to go oo trial here Wednesday, including two Egyptians, Attiya Badri Attiya and Ahmad Tawfiq Sa'id, who fled Qatar after the 1996 coup attempt.

A Tanzanian, two Saudis, a Bahraini, three Palestinians and a Sri Lankan are also among those charged. All of them are in custody, except the Tanzanian who like the Egyptians will be tried in abseotia.

Out of the 100 Qatari defendants, 37 will be tried in absentia, the attorney general said Monday as he announced that the trial was set to open.

Judicial sources warned that the defendants could face the death penalty if convicted of trying to overthrow Qatar's emir, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani.

The governmeot charges that former emir Sheikh Khalifa Ben Hamad Al Thani, deposed by his soo in 1995, instigated the coup oo Feb. 19, 1996 with "foreign" assistance.

Suspects include 1 royal family member, 2 Egyptians, 2 Saudis, 1 Bahraini, 3 Palestinians

Political sources in Qatar at the time implicated Bahrain and Saudi Arabia in the plot.

The ousted emir was reconciled with his son earlier this year, but he still lives in the south of France.

A member of the ruling family, former police minister Sheikh Hamad Ben Jassem Ben Hamad Al Thani, is among those facing charges. He too lives in exile in France.

Egyptian press reports said Monday that President Hosni Mubarak had asked Qatar to clarify urgently comments by its foreign minister implicating Egypt in the coup attempt.

The minister has said an Egyptian press campaign against Doha in the weeks leading up to the Nov. 16-18 Middle East ecooomic coofereoce was "aimed at Qatar particularly after the failure of the coup."

Sheikh Hamad later said that Egypt's calls to cancel the forum were aimed at "settling scores."

President Mubarak denied any Egyptian role in the failed hid to topple the emir and said two Egyptians suspected of involvemeot were "retired army officers who had temporary work contracts with the Qatari government."

FINALLY AFTER 100 YEARS: Christie's employee Victoria Coode examines Tuesday the work "Sur les planches de Trouville" (On the boardwalk in Trouville) by French painter Claude Monet, during a photocall in London. The painting, which has not been seen by the public for 100 years, is expected to fetch between 6.7 to 8.5 million dollars when it is sold by Christie's in Decemeber (AFP photo)

Netanyahu coalition faces deeper threat after news of withdrawal plan

TEL AVIV (R) — The government of Israel's Benyamin Netanyahu faced a rising threat of collapse on Tuesday over the prospect that he would agree to a further handover of land to Palestinians.

"If the prime minister and the cabinet decide oo any further withdrawal, we will act to bring down the government," said Michael Kleiner, a member of Mr. Netanyahu's Likud-Gesher-Tsomet alliance.

Mr. Kleiner said 10 coalition lawmakers in his "Land of Israel Front" had pledged to topple Mr. Netanyahu if a pullout were ordered. Mr. Netanyahu holds a 66-54 seat majority in the 120-seat parliament.

The outpouring of protest from members of Mr. Netanyahu's religious and right-wing coalition emerged over news reports that he would offer Palestinians six to eight per ceot of West Bank areas now under sole Israeli control.

The figure was higher than the two per cent previously offered by the right-wing governmeot but still far short of the 20 to 30 per cent Palestinians have demanded.

Mr. Netanyahu, 48, came to power last year resisting the land-for-peace deals signed by the government he ousted but promising to upbold Israel's international commitments which call for territorial coocessions.

"We will act to bring down the government," said Ze'ev Benyamin Begin, echoing the anger of other ultra-natiooalists in Mr. Netanyahu's coalition. "If it won't be on the first vote, it will be on the secood vote and if not, theo on the budget vote — at every opportunity."

Mr. Netanyahu's communications chief David Bar-Illan shrugged off talk of an imminent coalition collapse, telling Reuters: "There hasn't been a week since Mr. Netanyahu came to power that both his political demise and the political demise of the government have not been predicted."

Mr. Netanyahu faces growing pressure also from Washington, the main Middle East peace broker which has been publicly demanding he be ready to swap land for peace as required under deals with the Palestinians.

"The United States will have to decide for itself how it wants to advance a process and whether or not it wants to have a meeting with the prime minister," Mr. Bar-Illan said.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat said on Tuesday, after meeting Mr. Netanyahu's aide Yitzhak Molho in self-ruled Gaza, that there was oo official Israeli proposal of six to eight per cent.

"There is no proposal until oow," President Arafat told reporters as two of Mr. Netanyahu's top aides were due to fly to Cairo for talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's adviser Osama Baz.

Palestinians also voiced doubts on Tuesday about Mr. Netanyahu's commitment to peace.

"I think that the present domestic crisis and the lack of credibility that Israel suffers from, especially with the United States, has pushed Israel to declare the so-called proposal and they are trying to create the impression that they are serious," said Palestinian Planning Minister Nabil Shaath.

"This is not seriousness. They are not serious," he said.

Under interim peace deals with the PNA, Israel is committed to carrying out three further redeployments from mainly rural areas of the West Bank it occupied in the 1967.

Mr. Netanyahu meanwhile has vowed to cootinue settling Jews in the West Bank, including Arab east Jerusalem, despite a call by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright for a "time-out" in Israeli settlemeot activities.

To top off Mr. Netanyahu's troubles, his closest political confidant, Avigdor Lieberman, quit as chief of staff oo Sunday. On Mooday, Israeli televisioo stations said Mr. Lieberman could face a trial for alleged fraud and larceny.

Labour leader pledges 'unity' government if he wins next time

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The leader of Israel's opposition Labour Party, Ehud Barak vowed Mooday to set up a natiooal unity government if he becomes prime minister after general elections set for 2000.

"In order to advance the peace process, I would strive to set up a government as broad-based as possible and I would ask the Likud Party [of Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu] to join it," Mr. Barak said on Israeli television.

"I do oot see why Netanyahu should not be part of my government, as minister of information or even foreign affairs," he added.

Mr. Barak's remarks came as the Likud Party was facing its worst crisis since Mr. Netanyahu took over in June 1996.

Latest opinion polls put Mr. Barak ahead of Mr. Netanyahu but the large proportion of people still undecided make it difficult to predict who may win the oext legislative polls.

Turkey warns against EU as 'club for Christians'

MADRID (AFP) — The upcoming EU summit in Luxembourg will reveal whether the European Union is to be an exclusive "club for Christians" or whether it will broaden its base, Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz said.

In an interview published Tuesday in the Spanish daily El Pais, Mr. Yilmaz said the EU risked building a "Berlin Wall of culture" if it refused to admit Turkey, the only Muslim state in the region.

"Some say it openly and others, which is worse, keep quiet but remain convinced that Europe is confined to Christian countries," Mr. Yilmaz said.

On Monday, at the first formal debate in Brussels on EU enlargement, Greece sought to block Turkey's campaigo for EU membership, refusing to allow even exploratory talks between the bloc and Ankara.

Greece's long-held oppositioo to Turkey's membership stems in part from longstanding disputes with its neighbour, but in particular from arguments about sovereignty over several Aegean islands and Cyprus.

Mr. Yilmaz urged Greece to agree to dialogue oo outstanding bilateral issues including sovereignty in the Aegean and Cyprus.

"We do not expect to become full EU members tomorrow. We know there are many obstacles to be overcome. But no one can doubt that Turks are Europeans," he added.

"We were founder members of the Council of Europe in 1948. We have been NATO members for 45 years. We take part in almost all European organisations," he said.

Mr. Yilmaz said he had no desire to outlaw Islamists in Turkey but he ooted they would be "very happy" if the EU kept Turkey out of the grouping.

Regarding Kurds living in eastern Turkey, Mr. Yilmaz said any political solutioo would have to follow "military measures, because we do oot negotiate with terrorists."

Iraq's grounded pilots look for ray of hope on sanctions

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Pilots of Iraqi Airways, who have been grounded for more than seven years, are looking for a ray of hope that U.N. sanctions will be lifted before it is too late for them to ever fly again.

In the meantime, they have turned to other professions, just to make ends meet or to kill time.

"A lot of my colleagues have become taxi-drivers or now work as mechanics," said Sabah Ahmad, a pilot who has turned his hand to repairing air-conditioning units.

"Just after the embargo was imposed, I tried my hand at fixing household appliances, but I failed," said the balding but bearded 41-year-old.

"Then I had the idea of opening a workshop for repairing air-conditioners. That's something I know about and I'm coping, more or less," said Mr. Ahmad, who is married and has three children.

The family has moved to the home of Mr. Ahmad's father and rented out their own apartment to supplement their income.

Officially, the 150 pilots of Iraqi Airways are still employed by the state and receive a moothly salary, although they have been stripped of their wings since the U.N. sanctions were imposed after the 1990 iovasion of Kuwait.

Before the embargo, their monthly salary was 425 dinars and worth around $1,000.

Today, the salary has multiplied to 5,250 dinars but that's worth no more than three dollars — or eoough for 1.5 kilos of meat but not a carton of milk for the children. The Iraqi curreocy has collapsed because of the seven-year-old sanctions.

"I doo't just work for the sake of money, but also to pass the time," said Mr. Ahmad. Once accustomed to jetting around the world, the pilot feels like "a caged bird."

'if the embargo is not lifted soon, I'll have no choice but to forget that I'm a pilot and start a new life'

Mr. Ahmad said he oow saw "a ray of hope for the first time because the world has started to talk seriously about the embargo since the crisis with the United States" over U.N. arms inspections.

But "if the embargo is not lifted soon, I'll have no choice but to forget that I'm a pilot and start a new life," he said.

His colleagues in Iraqi Airways have not all succeeded in their temporary career changes. For Nabil Abdulaziz, 45, a hid to start up a business repairing car radiators eoded in failure.

"I couldn't go on. It was as if I was on another planet, with people who speak a differeot language," he said. "After a month, I gave up."

Mr. Abdulaziz has since been jobless and lives with his wife and daughter with his parents. "We survive thanks to my parents' help. What else can I do with three dollars a month?" he asked.

Like several other pilots, he tried to find a job with foreign airlines but was turned down. "The Iraqi passport is not respected anywhere, thanks to the Americans," he said.

"I'm starting to regret my choice of becoming a pilot. If I had another profession, it wouldn't have been so bad," he said, stroking his grey hair.

Mr. Ahmad and Mr. Abdulaziz said they had not forgotten how to fly a plane... yet. "But after seven years oo the ground, we will of course need several refresher courses," said Mr. Ahmad.

Sudan's refusal to extradite suspects resulted in tougher sanctions — U.S. official

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudan's refusal to extradite suspects in the attempted assassination of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in 1995 led Washingtoo to tougheo sanctions, the U.S. ambassador to Sudan has said.

The Sudanese government has "taken some serious and important steps with regards to issues of concern to the United States, including support of terrorist groups," U.S. Ambassador to Sudan Timothy Carey told the Akhbar Al Youm daily, for its edition published Tuesday.

But, "the Sudanese government has continued its defiance of the international community by failure to respond to a demand for extraditioo of the suspects in the attempted assassination of Egyptian President Mubarak in Addis Ababa," he added.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on Nov. 4 announced new measures against Sudan, criticising its alleged sponsorship of terrorism, poor human rights record and harsh treatment of southern Christians.

The new sanctions — the freezing of Sudanese assets in the U.S., the prohibitioo of U.S. trade with Sudan and the barring of financial transactions — add to existing measures that restricted U.S. exports and visas to Sudanese officials.

The tougher sanctions have provoked considerable anger in Khartoum, and two anti-U.S. demonstrations have been held in the city.

Relations betweeo Cairo and Khartoum deteriorated after Egypt accused Sudan of involvement in the hid to kill Presideot Muharak in June 1995 in Ethiopia when arriving for a summit of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).

The relations had been strained since the current, Islamist regime came to power in 1989.

Sudanese Foreign Minister Ali Osman Mohammad Taha told parliament Monday his country was making serious efforts to restore relatioos with Egypt and would announce steps sooo to normalise ties.

Israelis move into new West Bank settlement

KFAR ORANIM (AFP) — Five Israeli families have receotly moved into a new settlement built just inside the West Bank near Tel Aviv, witnesses said Tuesday.

The families were the first to occupy houses in the upscale 500-unit settlement of Kfar Oranim, located inside the so-called Modiin bloc of settlements on the edge of the West Bank 20 kilometres from Tel Aviv.

A spokesman for the Council of Settlements in the northern West Bank said construction of Kfar Oranim began in 1995 under the Labour government led by the late Yitzhak Rabin.

Initial authorisatioo for the settlement was given by the previous right-wing government of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir in 1991.

Modiin was not covered by a freeze on most settlement construction observed by the Rabin government beginning in 1994 in order to facilitate peace talks with the Palestinians.

The right-wing government which came to power last year under Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu, lifted the freeze in August 1996 but has yet to authorise construction of any new settlements outside Arab east Jerusalem.

Settlement expansion in Arab areas is a key factor in the deadlock in Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations over the past eight months.

The talks broke down in March when Netanyahu authorised construction of a major Jewish settlement in Arab east Jerusalem and U.S. efforts over the past six weeks to revive the peace process have yet to yield tangible results.

Palestinians consider settlement activity as designed to undermine their bid to create an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip with Arab east Jerusalem as its capital.

Kfar Oranim was built on a small hill as an extensioo of the Israeli town of Lapid and most houses lie within 10 metres of the "Green Line" separating Israeli and occupied territory.

Its cottages and small villas are on sale from around $250,000.

Israel has built around 145 settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip since they were occupied in 1967. The settlements currently have around 150,000 residents.

Tabloids get revenge on 'Womanizing' Earl Spencer

LONDON (AFP) — Britain's tabloid newspapers, given a public tongue-lashing by Earl Spencer at the funeral of his sister the Princess of Wales, had their revenge with front-page headlines on his alleged adultery with 12 women. "I've had 12 mistresses" screamed the Mirror's front-page. The Earl and his wife, Victoria, 31, are battling over whether their multi-million pound divorce should be heard in South Africa or London. Newspapers gave blanket coverage of claims made by lawyers for Victoria, 31, that Charles Spencer had a string of affairs that began within months of the marriage in 1989. They reported how 33-year-old Spencer announced to his wife that he planned to divorce her, while he was having a bath, and that he allegedly confessed to one mistress that he was "vicious, cruel and bullying" to his wife. A spokesman for Spencer said all the allegations were denied and would be answered later.

Even yaks not exempt from red tape

PARIS (AFP) — If you can't film yaks in Tibet, you've got to make the yaks come to you, reasoned Jean-Jacques Annaud as he puzzled how to get the extras he needed for his film "Seven Years in Tibet." The problem was, he was shooting in Argeotina, and llamas aren't quite the same. And Argentine authorities feared that importing yaks from just anywhere could bring in contagious diseases. Annaud eventually found a yak pack in Germany, but that was vetoed too — for fear of 'mad cow' disease. Finally, thanks to the Internet, he tracked a herd 15 yaks in Montana. Like any jet-setters, their documents had to be just right. So they were provided with their own passport, colour photos of left and right profiles, and even an ink imprint of their snout.

French butchers have had enough of butchery

PARIS (AFP) — France's butchers are fed up with being blamed for every barbaric crime under the sun, and they want a change of image. The French butchers' confederation, in a statement here Monday, said that every time journalists report on a massacre or scene of carnage, they resort too easily to terms such as 'butchery' and 'butcher.' "That insults a whole profession," the confederation complained. "A butcher distributes meat that is shared out along with bread and wine. His role evokes peace and fraternity. He is not an executioner or torturer," it added. And, ever trying to be helpful, the confederation suggested other words to use instead, such as carnage, slaying, massacre or hecatomb.

James Bond saves the world with mobile phone

LONDON (R) — James Bond is set to vanquish the villains with his mobile phone. He doesn't just use the phone to ring Miss Moneypenny, in 'Tomorrow Never Dies.' Bond's new superphone also blows up safes, opens doors, sees around corners and drives his car — all by remote control. Irish actor Pierce Brosnan has calculated that almost one third of the budget for the latest Bond spectacular is coming from product placement deals. Among the leading brands is Swedish communications giant Ericsson whose 'concept phone' is one of the stars of the new film. But Brosnan, shaken but not stirred by the commercial takeover of the movie icon, assured reporters that both his shoes and underwear were made in Britain.